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MODERN UTILITARIANISM.

MODERN UTILITARIANISM,

OR THE

SYSTEMS OF PALEY, BENTHAM, AND MILL

EXAMINED AND COMPARED.

BY

THOMAS RAWSON BIRKS,

KNIGHTBRIDGE PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

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PREFACE.

THE present volume contains the main part of a course of Lectures, in the October Term of last year, on Modern Utilitarianism. The subject is viewed historically, in connection with the views of Paley and Bentham, the criticisms of Mr Mill on those writers, and the statements and explanations of his own treatise. Several topics, however, included in that course, have been omitted, partly that the work might not swell to an inconvenient size; but also because they seemed to require a fuller treatment than could be given in the bounds of a single lecture, or one less controversial in form than those in this volume have inevitably assumed.

Various engagements, while preparing this work for the press, have hindered the treatment of the subject from being so complete and full as I should have desired it to be. But I trust that those who read with a view to gain a clearer apprehension of the truth on questions

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of high importance will find some real help in the present as well as in the previous work. I commend them both to the blessing of Him, who is the Light of the world, the only Source and Fountain of all true wisdom.

CAMBRIDGE,
May 28, 1874.

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MODERN UTILITARIANISM.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

CASUISTRY, the second subject of the Knightbridge Professorship, requires, I conceive, in the present day some latitude of interpretation. It seems the least departure from its historical and proper sense to understand it as equivalent with Controversial Ethics. It will thus form a natural transition from Moral Philosophy to the kindred and still higher subject of Moral Theology. It is only through conflict with plausible errors that we can hope to emerge from the low valleys, and climb the mountain sides of truth.

In entering on a subject so wide and various, my course seems almost defined by the labours of my predecessors, who have given a Review of English philosophers from Hobbes to Bentham and Coleridge, and a History of Moral Philosophy from the early times of Greece to the present century. It is natural for me to avoid ground they have so lately traversed, and to begin with the ethical controversy, of which Cambridge and Westminster have been the two immediate centres during the last eighty or ninety years.

Two different forms of utilitarian morality, those of Paley and Bentham, ran side by side for half a century, hardly mingling their streams. The first had Cambridge for its birthplace and principal home, the other certain exclusive circles in the metropolis, who founded an organ of their principles, towards the close of the period, in the *Westminster Review*. But forty years ago, at the death of Bentham, a new era of ethical thought and conflict began. Cambridge shook off its torpor, and its passive acceptance of Paley's authority, and awoke to a wider range of ethical study once more. The Discourse of Professor Sedgwick on the Studies of the University led the way. It was followed soon by the revival of this Professorship, and the successive lectures and writings of Dr Whewell and Professors Grote and Maurice. About the same time Mr Mill, succeeding to his father and Mr Bentham, assumed the championship of their general theory. The doctrine, however, in his hands, underwent a gradual change into a less exclusive and arrogant, a more comprehensive and catholic form. Retaining utility, or the doctrine of consequences, for the grand foundation, he professed to combine it with Stoic and even Christian elements. The posthumous Examination, by Prof. Grote, of Mr Mill's latest utterances on ethical philosophy, is a model of candid and thoughtful controversy, and seems to bring this forty years' conflict to a worthy close.

Cambridge, within seven years, has mourned the loss of all these four eminent writers, to whom the revival in its bosom of moral and mental studies is chiefly due. The oldest, and the earliest in the field, Prof. Sedgwick, has been the latest survivor, and has been removed very lately in a ripe old age, full of years and of honour. Within a few months the champion of the rival system,

highly admired by his own disciples, has followed him to the tomb. The time seems, then, most suitable for a review of the whole controversy, and an attempt to derive some definite conclusions, if possible, from the latest phase in the eager and earnest conflict of thought in this "eternal battlefield." My present object is to compare and examine the views of Paley, Bentham and Mill, the three leaders of modern utilitarianism. The teaching of recent Cambridge moralists, especially Prof. Sedgwick and Dr Whewell, will then require, in another course, a similar examination.

The philosophy of Locke, based on sensation, already prevailed at Cambridge in the middle of last century. As a natural consequence, the views of Clarke and More, of Cudworth, Shaftesbury, Butler, and Hutcheson, were displaced by the rival creed, taught by Gay, Rutherford, Brown and others, and which resolves all virtue into far-seeing prudence. But Paley and Bentham are the two names most closely linked with this utilitarian theory at the close of the last, and in the earlier part of the present century.

Their personal history has several points of close resemblance. Paley was born in 1743, and Bentham in 1748, only five years later. At fifteen Paley entered Christ's College, Cambridge, and Bentham became a student of Queen's, Oxford, at the same age. At twenty Paley became senior wrangler, and took a bachelor's degree. Bentham gained no similar distinction, but took his master's degree in 1768 at the same early age. His last visit to Oxford was in that year, while still a minor, to vote in the election of a member for the university. He then met with a pamphlet of Dr Priestley, in which "the greatest happiness of the greatest number," was laid

down as the only reasonable basis of all good government. It was this book and this phrase, he says, which decided his principles in the matter of public and private morals.

Three years earlier, in 1765, Paley had gained the university prize for the best dissertation in Latin Prose. His subject was a comparison of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophies in their influence on the morals of the people, and he espoused strongly the Epicurean side. Next year he was elected fellow of his college. He returned into residence, became college tutor, and soon after began to lecture on metaphysics and morals. He left Cambridge in 1775. His first publication, the treatise on *Moral and Political Philosophy*, appeared in 1786, but its substance had been given in his college lectures from ten to twenty years before. The *Horæ Paulinæ* appeared in 1790, the *Evidences* in 1794, and the *Natural Theology*, his latest work of importance, in 1802. He died three years later, in 1805, at the age of sixty-two years.

The fragment, *On Government*, Bentham's first publication, appeared in 1776. It was an attack on Blackstone's *Commentaries*, and the doctrine of social contract, marked by strength of invective and a vigorous style. But his first main work on jurisprudence, including ethics, was the *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. It appeared in 1789, the year of the French Revolution, just three years after Paley's no less celebrated work. It is still, perhaps, the best known and most important of his writings. The rest appeared after Paley's death, whom he outlived twenty-seven years. In 1810 he published *The Chrestomathy*, in 1817 his *Table of the Springs of Action*, and in 1822 his *Project of Codification*, where he first makes large use of Dr Priestley's phrase.

Still later he replaced it by what he thought still better, "the greatest happiness on the whole." He died in 1832 at the age of eighty-four years. The *Deontology* is his only work on Ethics proper, as distinct from Jurisprudence. It was compiled by Dr Bowring, his executor and fond admirer, from materials which Bentham had supplied him for the purpose, partly in his lifetime, but was only completed and published soon after his death.

Utilitarianism, in Paley, had formed an alliance with Christian Theology, though a theology of rather a meagre and barren kind. In Bentham it was joined with the study of Jurisprudence, a thorough dislike of creeds and establishments, and the vehement advocacy of radical reform. In the words of Mr Mill, his early disciple, he is "the great subversive thinker of his age and country," a merit which many will think to be at least of a very equivocal kind. The circles of thought influenced by the two writers were widely different. The effect of Paley's work was much wider, but less absorbing and exclusive. It leavened for many years the habits of thought of a very large number both of the clergy and educated laity of England, till rival influences asserted their superior strength. But Bentham lived on, and wrote on, amidst a small, but strongly sympathizing circle of sceptical philosophers, advanced reformers, and legal students. His works, much neglected at home, but improved by Dumont in their French version, found warm admirers and disciples among those who claimed to be men of progress in France, America, and other foreign lands. Sir James Mackintosh has given a striking description of the strength and weakness of his influence, and the character of the disciples who clustered around him in his later years. And though the elder

Mr Mill has denounced it, almost with fierce invective, there can be little doubt of its substantial truth.

"The disciples of Mr Bentham are more like the hearers of an Athenian philosopher, than the pupils of a modern professor, or the cool proselytes of a modern writer....As they deserve the credit of braving vulgar prejudices, so they must be content to bear the imputation of falling into the neighbouring vice of seeking distinction by singularity, and of considering themselves a chosen few, whom initiation into the most secret mysteries of philosophy entitles to look down with pity, if not contempt, on the profane multitude....A hermit in the greatest of cities, seeing only his disciples, and indignant that that system of government and law, which he believes to be perfect, are disregarded by the many and the powerful, Mr Bentham has been betrayed into the most unphilosophical hypothesis, that all the ruling bodies, who guide the community, have conspired to stifle and defeat his discoveries. He is too little acquainted with doubts, to believe the honest doubts of others, and too angry to make allowance for their prejudices and habits. To the unpopularity of his philosophical and political doctrines he has added the obloquy which arises from an unseemly treatment of doctrines and principles, which even a regard to the feelings of the best men requires to be approached with decorum and respect. Both he and his followers have treated morals too juridically. They do not seem to be aware that there is an essential difference in the subjects of the two sciences."

The *Deontology* is Bentham's only work, which treats of Ethics proper, in contrast to Jurisprudence. All the defects of his tone of thought, disguised elsewhere by his partial merit as a jurist, stand out here in bold relief.

It is not surprising that Mr Mill should strive to free the teacher he admires from the discredit of closing the labours of a life by such a work, even at the price of doing violence to facts which are evident. Its exact arrangement may be due to the editor, Bentham's chosen executor, but the substance is plainly his own. It is his parting legacy, to replace what he styles the nonsense of Plato and Aristotle in the esteem and reverence of the coming generations of mankind.

It was in the year of Bentham's death that Cambridge began to shake off its lethargy on moral subjects, and a new era in its culture of ethical science began. Several things had prepared the change. The acceptance of Paley's work was due partly to his academical reputation, and the charm and clearness of his style, but also to the fact that moral studies held a very secondary place in the actual system of the university. Its exclusive dominance had been thus more apparent than real. No sooner was it taken for a text-book, than several voices of Cambridge men, Gisborne, Pearson, and Robert Hall, were raised against its utilitarian teaching. The Evangelical movement, which gave to the church from Cambridge such names as Wilberforce, Simeon, Henry Martyn, Milner, and Farish, was a powerful counteraction to the chilling and selfish aspect of Paley's theory. The writings of Wordsworth and Coleridge were another strong influence in the same direction. Both were Cambridge men, and when they rose slowly to wide celebrity, the richer and deeper type of thought in their poems or philosophical fragments could not fail to leaven the rising talent of the university to which they both belonged. In 1818 Coleridge republished the *Friend*, where a separate essay contains a review and confutation of Paley's doctrine of

general consequences as being the only guide in morals. About 1832 he visited Cambridge after a long absence. Admiring listeners gathered round him, and the richness and fluency of his discourse on high themes of philosophy and faith would deepen and confirm the influence his writings had gradually secured. And no mind, which had welcomed and admired the noble thoughts in Wordsworth's *Laodamia*, could remain in full sympathy with Paley's ethics, or see a grand discovery in Bentham's tedious and vague arithmetical problems on the summation of miscellaneous "lots" of pains and pleasures.

The first open sign of a new era of Cambridge thought was given in Prof. Sedgwick's well-known *Discourse*. It spoke, as with a trumpet's voice, to the students of the university, while it urged them to take a lofty view of their true vocation, and moral responsibility. It contained some just and forcible strictures on the defects of Locke's philosophy, and a strong protest against utilitarian ethics, and the faults of Paley's work. It was delivered in Trinity Chapel, December, 1832, the year of Bentham's death, but published almost a year later. In the interval appeared the first of Dr Whewell's many philosophical treatises, *Astronomy and General Physics considered with reference to Natural Theology*. Archdeacon Hare, then also a tutor of Trinity, took an active share in the same general movement. In July, 1835, Dr Whewell published a long preface to Sir J. Mackintosh's *Dissertation on the Progress of Moral and Mental Philosophy*, when it was reprinted in a separate form, and defended it from the severe and cynical criticism which the elder Mill had written upon it shortly before. The views of Bentham as well as Paley are there discussed at some length. In November, 1837, he preached four sermons before the university on the Foundation of

Morals, and dedicated them to his colleague, Archdeacon Hare. He there gave his opinion that "the evils which arose from the countenance given to Paley's system," by its almost exclusive adoption as a moral text-book, were so great as to make it desirable "to withdraw our sanction from his doctrines without further delay."

In June, 1838, he accepted the Knightbridge Professorship. Early in the next year he gave a course of Lectures on the English Moralists, from Hobbes to Paley. In 1845 he published *Elements of Morality*, a systematic treatise on the principles and outlines of moral duty. In 1846 there followed *Six Lectures on Systematic Morality*. In 1855, on resigning the office, he was succeeded by Prof. Grote, also opposed to the purely utilitarian creed. But while occupied largely with other works on philosophy, the *History of the Inductive Sciences, Scientific Ideas, Novum Organon Renovatum,* and the *Philosophy of Discovery, Indications of the Creator,* and the *Plurality of Worlds,* his ethical labours did not cease till near his death. His *Platonic Dialogues* reached a second edition in 1860, and his *Lectures,* with others added on Plato, Aristotle, St Augustine, Clark, and Coleridge, in 1862. Finally, in 1864, he published a fourth edition of the *Elements,* with a supplement in reply to Mr Mill's *Review,* twelve years earlier, and various other criticisms.

But while the utilitarianism of Paley was thus displaced and set aside at Cambridge, which had been its birthplace and nursery, the controversy only passed into a new phase. The rival form of the main doctrine, that of Bentham, rose like a phœnix from the funeral pile of the *Deontology,* and found in Mr Mill a new champion, of great zeal and growing reputation. The two schools of ethical thought at Cambridge and Westminster, those

of Paley reversed, and Bentham recast and modified, came henceforth into direct and frequent collision. Mr Mill assailed Prof. Sedgwick's *Discourse* very contemptuously, soon after it appeared, in the *Westminster Review*. The youthful critic had not yet escaped from the mischievous contagion of Bentham's habitual arrogance towards all who crossed his favourite theories, or disputed his oracular decisions. Illusion could scarcely go further than in the closing paragraph, where he asserts that the moralists he opposes had hitherto reserved a monopoly of high pretension to themselves. But the unseemly tone of this early review disappears happily, with growing experience, in Mr Mill's latest works. Only three months after this review appeared, Dr Whewell, in his Preface to Mackintosh, remarked on some of its statements, that they implied a real, though unconscious approach, to the principles of that rival school of ethics which it condemned. This suspicion was confirmed by the later review of Bentham, in August 1838, six years after his death. Excessive praise, it is true, is still heaped upon him, and he is called one of the two great "seminal minds of his age." But there is mingled with this eulogy no small amount of dissent and partial blame. As a subversive thinker, a radical reformer, and a jurist, he is extolled almost to the skies. But as a scholar, in his treatment of the old philosophers, and as a moralist, and student of human life and thought, a very inferior and secondary place is justly assigned him. He is styled a half thinker, who could see far and clearly between two narrow walls, but who needed to be followed in the same track by "complete thinkers," who could look widely on every side. Such a complete thinker Mr Mill was plainly aspiring to become; who should remedy the conspicuous faults of Bentham's bare and

naked theories, and enrich the utilitarian creed with elements derived from wider experiences of human life and character, and more fertile schools of thought. In his review of Coleridge, March, 1840, he recognises largely the merits and ability of a writer, whose views in politics, morals, and religion, were widely different from his own, and almost directly opposed to them. There was here a fresh sign that utilitarianism, in his hands, was entering on a new phase, and undergoing a change, by which it might be transfigured into a more eclectic and comprehensive form of ethical theory.

In October, 1852, a criticism on Dr Whewell's *Lectures* and *Elements*, sixty pages in length, and rather contemptuous in style, was published by Mr Mill in the *London and Westminster Review*. At the outset a heavy censure was aimed against the universities for their vowed adherence to opinions formulated for them three centuries before. On this ground they are pronounced incompetent to deal freely and fairly with ethical questions, or to depart from a fixed and stereotyped line of thought. It seems to be assumed that men are so mercenary by nature, as to be incapable of following sincerely after truth, so long as their convictions involve social consequences of any kind whatever. The creeds and formularies of the Church of England are also pronounced, with a kind of oracular decision, to be prodigiously in arrear of the progress of thought, as that elastic phrase was understood in the circle to which the critic belonged. The same charge is transferred to Dr Whewell himself at the close of the review. He has made no improvement, it is said, on the old moral doctrines. He has done still worse, and striven to set up anew several of them, which had been loosened or thrown down by the stream of human progress. One of these

newly exploded doctrines, in Mr Mill's view, is found in the statement that "reverence for superiors is a duty," with the added remark, that it is "part of the natural feelings of a good man, and a necessary condition of the duties of obedience." The other statement, equally condemned, as "out of season judged, and singular, and rash," is that "men are blameable in disbelieving truths after they are promulgated, though they may be ignorant without blame before their promulgation." Now both of these doctrines, thus condemned to oblivion in the review, form plainly an integral part of the teaching of Christ and His Apostles. The conclusion, then, must be plain to any Christian mind. A progress, in which they are loosened and thrown aside, cannot be upward into clearer light, but must be downward into some cave of shadows, a region of social anarchy and irreligious darkness.

In the close of 1861 Mr Mill contributed three articles to *Fraser's Magazine*, which were soon after published in a separate work, as an explanation and defence of Utilitarianism. His divergence from the teaching of Bentham is here very manifest, and almost amounts to a surrender of the main position he professes to defend. Several distinctive features of the earlier creed are openly renounced, or silently abandoned; and the attempt is made to combine the doctrine with materials drawn from rival schools of ethics, so as to reconcile it with the facts of conscience, and some reasonable regard to the accumulated and inherited experience of mankind. Still later, in 1864, Dr Whewell replied, by an Appendix to a fourth edition of the *Elements of Morality*, to the strictures of Mr Mill, twelve years previous, in his earlier review. A posthumous *Examination*, by Prof. Grote, of Mr Mill's *Utilitarianism*, appeared in 1870, and is like a closing act in this long-

continued controversy, which began with the appearance of Prof. Sedgwick's *Discourse*, forty years ago. There is a striking contrast between its beginning and its close. That brief *Discourse* was marked by eloquence and fervour, high and noble instincts, vivacity and brilliance of thought, but verges, in part, on the looseness which often attends strong feeling and impassioned declamation. The *Examination* is conspicuous for searching analysis, comprehensiveness, and candour, and bears more resemblance, as composed shortly before the author's death, to the calm and quiet beauty of a sunset sky. The first attempts to cut boldly through the knots of ethical controversy with a keen and polished blade, like Excalibar, that sparkles and flashes in the sunlight. The last seeks to untie them patiently, and thus to retain unbroken and uninjured, with a cautious and gentle hand, the whole tangled and complex skein of rival moral principles, and apparently conflicting ethical theories.

It is not easy to sum up, and state impartially in few words, the present issue of these debates, which have lasted for a whole generation, and in which Mr Mill has taken the leading part on the one side, though with many able allies, and four eminent Cambridge names, of high and varied gifts, have been foremost on the other. The works of Mr Mill on other subjects have gained him a high reputation; and at his decease, in the view of his warm admirers, the greatest of recent English philosophers passed away. The width of his present influence is owned, even by those who view it, on the whole, as a cause for regret and sorrow. His *Autobiography* has placed in clear relief what nearly all discerning and intelligent readers must have suspected before, that his sensationalism in metaphysics, and utilitarianism in ethics, were really connected

with an early formed and deep-seated antipathy to all the distinctive features of the Christian faith. It is well that the veil should at length be withdrawn. It is no sign of that heroism, the want of which in Paley he has condemned with extreme severity, that it should have been permitted to rest upon his true opinions on these subjects so long. But his own turn to undergo a searching examination, like that to which he has submitted the views of Sir W. Hamilton, has scarcely begun. Meanwhile the Editor of Prof. Grote's *Examination,* Dr M'Cosh in his *Examination of Mr Mill's Metaphysics,* and Mr Leckie in his *History of European Morals,* all opponents of the system he advocates, confess the fact of its popularity; and speak of "the reigning ethics of utilitarianism," as a creed which has a firm hold on the rising thought of our country and our universities, and a wide influence throughout England at the present hour.

But however wide its prevalence, or plausible and attractive some of the forms it may have assumed, there are many signs that writers of a higher mood, from Plato down to the earlier and the more recent Cambridge moralists, have not spoken or written in vain. The changes, which Mr Mill has introduced into the doctrine he inherited from his father and Mr Bentham, bear witness to the secret power of the antagonists he affected almost to despise. He has been a true Parthian in ethical controversy. He shoots keen arrows, but retreats, while they are discharged, to some new and safer position. A galaxy of intelligent writers, very diverse in their other views, and independent in their styles of thought, still raise their voices unitedly against the utilitarian theory, even when it has undergone its latest process of revision and attempted improvement. Dr M'Cosh, Dr Calderwood,

and Mr Morell, in their more solid works, Mr Shairp, in his ethical essays, Prof. Blackie and Mr Masson, in their Lectures at the Royal Institution, Mr Leckie, in his *History of European Morals,* Mr Sterling, in his earnest advocacy of the Hegelian philosophy, Mr Laurie, in his review of Moral Theories, and Mr Thornton, in his *Old-fashioned Ethics and Common Sense Metaphysics,* all agree in their opposition to the purely Utilitarian or Apobatic Theory of Morals. The last of them adopts in his Preface the striking words of Carlyle, whose utterances, however vague, and ill suited to build up any outline of fixed and certain truth, have always been full and clear against mechanical views of human nature, and the enthronement of momentary pleasures, however increased by summation, as the supreme good. He speaks as follows.

"Has the word Duty no meaning? Is what we call Duty no divine messenger and guide, but a false earthly phantasm, made up of Desire and Fear? In that Logic-mill of thine, hast thou an earthly mechanism for the godlike itself, and for grinding out Virtue from the husks of Pleasure? I tell thee, Nay! Otherwise not on Morality but on Cookery let us build our stronghold. There, brandishing our fryingpan as a censer, let us offer up sweet incense to the devil, and live at will in the fat things he has provided for his elect; seeing that with stupidity and a good digestion a man may front much.... Or is there no God? or at best an absentee God, sitting idle since the first Sabbath, at the outside of His universe, and seeing it go? Know that for men's being, whatever else be needed, Faith is the one thing needful."

The object of the following Lectures is to examine and compare the three modern types of Utilitarianism, in Paley's *Moral Philosophy,* Bentham's *Principles of*

Morals, and Mr Mill's reviews and later treatises, and especially its third and latest form. Every system, I believe, is theoretically unsound, and practically mischievous, which endeavours, by limited and fragmentary deductions, based on a brief experience of the transient results of actions in the present life, to replace the authority of conscience, and the revealed commands of God, and accepts such imperfect guesses as a solid basis, on which the whole building of Moral Science can safely rest. The improvements attempted by Mr Mill do not really touch the main and vital defect of the system to which he adheres. Their chief effect is to turn his moral teaching into what he styles, in his criticism on his northern rival, a set of "imperfect junctions." In spite of his high reputation, his undoubted ability, and the connectedness and continuity of his various writings, I believe him to be, on almost every subject he handles, a misleading and unsafe guide; because he has turned away persistently from those highest and noblest truths, which are the mountain tops of the wide universe of thought, and on which all lower truths inseparably depend. His bold assertion in the opening of his review of Dr Whewell's works may be safely and absolutely reversed. The morality of Christ and His Apostles, and even its imperfect reflection in the creeds and formularies of the English Church, is no fatal clog, as he rashly affirms, on the ethical progress of our universities. It is prodigiously in advance, not in arrear, of the moral teaching of Bentham, Godwin, and Helvetius, writers whom he holds in especial honour, and in whose steps he strives to follow, so as to manufacture an ethical creed, free from the intrusion of religious faith. The old, familiar saying, "Duties are ours, events are God's," contains a truer and deeper wisdom

than the most skilful process of arithmetic, under a merely utilitarian creed, can ever attain. And while prudent foresight is one of the moral virtues, and must hold an honourable place, though not the highest, in any complete scheme of ethical teaching, to trace all the consequences of any action, so as to settle thereby its moral character, to the exclusion of every other test, transcends the powers of the wisest philosopher, and even of superhuman intelligence; because to see the end from the beginning, in all the width and grandeur of the real problem, must ever remain the exclusive attribute and prerogative of Omniscience alone.

LECTURE I.

THE SYSTEMS OF PALEY, BENTHAM, AND MILL.

UTILITARIAN Ethics, in modern times, have assumed three forms, differing greatly from each other. They are contained in Paley's *Moral Philosophy*, Bentham's *Theory of Legislation and Deontology*, and Mr Mill's *Treatise* and earlier reviews. To compare them with profit, it seems essential to define first of all the true place of utility and the doctrine of consequences in Moral Science.

All actions of moral agents may be viewed in three aspects. The first refers them to some rule, law, or standard of good and evil, of right and wrong, which goes before, and which is supposed to be fixed, either by the Supreme Will, or by the essential nature of all created and intelligent being. The second compares them with the constitution of the human mind, and the emotions of the heart, as known and proved by general experience. The third considers their connection with the results and consequences that follow. The first is their objective, intuitive, or supernal aspect; the second subjective, inductive, or internal; and the third apobatic, derivative, and external. They answer nearly to the past, present, and future in time, and to the beginning, the middle, and the issue or close, in every course of action, human or

divine. In the first we gaze on fixed and eternal relations, like those of geometry, depending simply on the existence of the Creator, and the essential laws of intelligent being, actual or possible, living or unborn. In the second we trace the actual emotions of the human heart, its instincts and desires, discern the reality and supremacy of conscience, and seek by induction to eliminate the misconceptions, errors, and discordancies, to which we find, by experience, that moral judgments and feelings are exposed. In the third we trace the results of different actions, or kinds and modes of action, and seek to decide on their moral character by the happiness or unhappiness, the personal and social mischiefs or benefits, to which they appear to lead.

All these three elements need to be harmonized in a full and comprehensive scheme of morality. The first is the highest and noblest, on which the others depend. The second is its imperfect reflection in the individual soul, modified by the positive constitution of human nature, and the diffracting influence of personal character and will. In a practical sense, however, it is the most immediate and direct; and deals at once with those emotions of praise and blame, of self-approval or remorse, which are the common experience and inheritance of all mankind. Its weakness arises from the plain fact, that the moral emotions are often clouded and obscured by prejudice and passion, and suffer from local and temporary disturbances of various kinds, so as to constitute no fixed and sure rule for the guidance of human conduct. The third or apobatic element in moral truth is the most secondary and subordinate, when kept within the limits of personal experience and mere human foresight. It simply completes, by a prudential element of

better or worse, the grand, broad features and contrasts of moral right and wrong. But when we include the whole scheme of Providence, and the prospect of a life to come, it becomes a vast moral superstructure, equal in extent and dignity to the foundation on which it is reared. For all virtue and excellence in the creature, as it proceeds from the Uncreated Goodness, must ever be tending, in its progress and aim, to lose itself in the abyss of that Infinite Perfection from which it is derived, and to which it seeks to return.

The consequences of all moral action admit of a threefold division. They are either initial, medial, or final. Our conclusions may vary widely, as one or other of these are kept mainly in view. Initial consequences are those which depend immediately on the nature or tendency of the action in itself, when it is not deflected by some foreign influence. They depend wholly on the moral features of the act, are its natural corollaries, and when such features are denied, must logically perish and disappear. Medial consequences are those which depend on all the complex variety of influences by which the agent is surrounded, the nature of human life, the characters and habits of his fellow-men, and the whole moral atmosphere in which he lives. The ultimate are those which result from the great law of God's universal providence, by which evil is overruled for good, and a righteous judgment is exercised in the actions of all mankind. Thus, while initial consequences involve and imply the reality and permanence of moral distinctions, and the medial, within certain limits, and subject to higher laws of duty, are the proper field for the exercise of private prudence or legislative wisdom, the ultimate and final results travel far beyond the range of mere worldly

prudence, and link themselves with the grandest and most impressive truths of Christian Theology. They speak to us plainly of a righteous judgment after death, and of a life to come; and point onward to the high truth, that the chief end of man, without which he attains only a maimed and imperfect being, is "to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever."

The doctrine of consequences, the basis of utilitarian theories, is on this view not the whole of moral science, nor even its chief and highest portion. It deals really with one partial and limited division of one of these three main elements. It is a doctrine of worldly prudence alone. And this prudence is robbed of its chief and best materials, unless we first recognize in human actions an essential contrast of right and wrong, of good and evil, and also, as their result, vast diversities of truthfulness and falsehood, vice and virtue, holiness and unholiness, selfishness and benevolence, in the conduct and character of our fellow-men.

The moral system of Paley, apart from mere details, includes these chief elements;—an exclusion of rules which are false or inadequate, a description of that happiness which is the basis and motive power of the whole system, a definition of virtue, and of moral obligation, a combination of the double rule of the will of God and utility by the doctrine of Divine benevolence, and an argument for the necessity and importance of general rules.

Under the first head, four rules are mentioned, which are to be excluded as insufficient on various grounds. The first is the Law of Honour, defined as a system of rules constructed by people of fashion to help their intercourse with each other, and having no other purpose.

A rule so defined needs little argument to prove its utter imperfection and deficiency as a safe moral guide. The second is the Law of the Land. But this omits many duties, which cannot be made proper subjects for compulsion, and leaves many evils unpunished, because they are hardly capable of legal definition, or even because the attempt to restrain them by law would produce greater evils. The third is the Scriptures. But these, Paley argues, neither give, nor were intended to give, more than general principles, and cannot therefore supersede a science of morals, which may unfold these into their details, and give more specific directions than the Scriptures were meant to supply. The fourth is the Moral Sense, or moral instincts. On this subject he concludes that either there exist no such instincts, or that they cannot now be distinguished from prejudices and habits, and therefore cannot be safely depended upon in moral reasoning. By the exclusion of all these rules, as either false or insufficient, we are shut up to acceptance of the one test of general utility alone.

But if moral right or wrong can be tested only by the tendency to promote human happiness, it is needful to define, however imperfectly, that happiness which is the basis of the whole scheme. A condition is happy, according to Paley, in which the amount or aggregate of pleasure exceeds that of pain, and the degree of happiness depends on the quantity of this excess. He disclaims "much usual declamation on the dignity and capacity of our nature, on the worthiness, refinement and delicacy of some satisfactions, or the meanness, grossness and sensuality of others," because he holds that pleasures differ in nothing but continuance and intensity; from a just computation of which every question concerning human happiness must receive

its decision. But he then proceeds to mitigate the bareness of this arithmetical creed by some general maxims, derived from the practical experience of life. Happiness, first, does not consist in the pleasures of sense, in whatever profusion and variety, because they are of short continuance, and lose their relish by repetition, and the eagerness for intense delights takes away the relish for all others. It does not consist in exemption from pain, labour, care and molestation, such a state being usually attended, not with ease, but depression of spirits, tastelessness, and imaginary anxiety. Neither does it consist in rank or elevated station, since no superiority gives much pleasure, but what is gained over a rival, and this may exist in all ranks and degrees of life. The first great secret of happiness is to know beforehand what will please us, and what pleasures will hold out. It consists, then, mainly, in the exercise of the social affections; in the exercise of our faculties, whether of body or mind; in the pursuit of some engaging end; in the prudent constitution of the habits, or to set them in such a way that every change may be for the better. And lastly, in health, in which is to be included not only freedom from bodily distempers, but that tranquillity, firmness, and elasticity of mind, which we call good spirits, and which depends commonly on the same causes, and yields to the same management, as our bodily constitution. Health in this sense, he concludes, is "the one thing needful, and no pains, expense, or restraint is too much, by which it may be secured."

The third and main element of the system is its definition of virtue. According to Paley it is "the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness." So that, by this description, "the good of mankind is the subject, the will of

God the rule, and everlasting happiness the motive of human virtue." In habitual virtue, it is added, the good of mankind, the will of God, or the desire for eternal happiness, may not be consciously in the thoughts. So "a man may be a very good servant without being conscious, at every turn, of a particular regard to his master's will, or an express attention to his master's interest. Indeed, your best old servants are of this sort. But then he must have served for a length of time under the actual direction of these motives, to bring it to this; in which service his merit and virtue consist." Another conclusion, rather strangely expressed, is that the Christian religion "hath not ascertained the precise quantity of virtue necessary to salvation."

The third question to which Paley gives an answer, is the nature of moral obligation. Why am I obliged to keep my word? His first remark is that the various answers, because it is agreeable to the fitness of things, conformable to reason, or conformable to truth; that it promotes the public good, or is required by the will of God; all of them ultimately coincide. "And this is the reason that moralists, from whatever different principles they set out, commonly agree in their conclusions." But when a further answer is required, Paley offers one which he seems to think very simple, that it goes to the bottom of the subject, and leaves nothing to be desired. Obligation is when a man "is urged by a violent motive resulting from the command of another." In moral obligation this violent motive is the will and command of God, and the expectation of reward for well-doing or punishment for ill-doing, in the life to come. By this explanation, he conceives, the air of mystery, which must else hang over the subject, is removed. Private happiness is to be our motive, and the

will of God the rule. The difference between an act of prudence and an act of duty is really the contrast between a regard to consequences only in the present life, and a respect to the rewards and punishments of the life to come.

How, then, are this view of moral obligations, as resting solely on the Divine will, and the doctrine of utility, to be combined together? Simply by the great truth of the Divine benevolence. This is inferred from various evidence, and from the multiplied proofs of design in all creation, tending to enjoyment. But every one may have some part of the evidence, which impresses him more than the rest; and Paley sees the benevolence of the Deity more clearly in the pleasures of very young children than in anything in the world. The example which strikes any man's mind most strongly is the true example for him. The conclusion is, that God wills and wishes the happiness of his creatures, and hence that, in doing good to mankind, we obey the will of God. "The method of coming at the will of God concerning any action, by the light of nature, is to inquire into the tendency of that action to promote or diminish general happiness."

Actions, it is inferred, are to be estimated by their tendency. Whatever is expedient is right. It is the utility of any moral rule alone, which constitutes its obligation. But the bad consequences of an act may be either particular or general. The particular is the mischief which that single action immediately occasions. The general bad consequence is the violation of some necessary or useful rule. "You cannot permit one action and forbid another, without showing a difference between them. Consequently the same sort of actions must be generally permitted or generally forbidden. The necessity of general

rules in human government is apparent. But they are necessary to every moral government, or any dispensation, whose object is to influence the conduct of reasonable creatures." Else rewards and punishments would cease to be such, and become accidents. "They would occasion pain or pleasure when they happened; but, following in no known order from any particular course of action, they could have no previous influence or effect upon the conduct. Consequently, whatever reason there is to expect future reward or punishment at the hand of God, there is the same reason to believe that He will proceed in the distribution of it by general rules."

Let us now turn from the moral system of Paley to that of Bentham. This may be best derived from the *Theory of Legislation*, almost his earliest work, which appeared only three years after the *Moral Philosophy*. It begins with a maxim, strangely inconsistent with the later dictum of the *Deontology*, where he says that the word "ought" should be banished from moral speculations. The public good OUGHT to be the object of the legislator; general utility OUGHT to be the foundation of his reasonings. To know what constitutes the true good of the community is what constitutes the science of legislation; the art consists in finding the means to realize that good."

The doctrine is then developed in the following order. First, the principle of utility, though widely recognized to some extent, is worthless unless rivals are excluded, and it becomes the sole and exclusive ground of moral science. Nature has placed man under the empire of pleasure and pain. We owe to them all our ideas; we refer to them all our judgments, and all the determinations of our life. He who pretends to withdraw himself from them knows

not what he says. His only object is to seek pleasure and shun pain, even when he rejects the greatest pleasures, and embraces pains the most acute. These eternal and irresistible motives ought to be the great study of the moralist and the legislator. The principle of utility subjects every thing to those two motives.

Such is the starting-point of the whole system, and it involves a plain logical contradiction. Every one is impelled by an irresistible instinct, from which the attempt to escape is a folly and delusion, to avoid personal pain and to seek personal pleasure. Such is the universal and irreversible law of Nature. But while the herd of mankind are left under this necessity of pure selfishness, the moralist and legislator, we are taught, must rise above it. The public good, not private pleasure, ought to be their object; and general utility, or the means of securing good to others, and not of merely securing their own pleasure, "ought to be the foundation of their reasonings."

The next step in the development of the system is the exposure of worthless rivals. Two of these are named, the principle of Asceticism, and the principle of Sympathy and Antipathy, or, as it is named later in the *Deontology*, "ipse-dixitism." The maxim of the first, as expounded by Bentham, is "a horror of pleasures." "Every thing which gratifies the senses, in their view, is odious and criminal. They found morality on privation, and virtue on self-renouncement. These atrabilious pietists flatter themselves that every instant of voluntary pain here below will procure them an age of happiness in another life." Again, the principle of sympathy and antipathy, styled afterwards "the principle of caprice," consists in approving and blaming by sentiment, without giving any other reason for the decision except the decision itself. "It is not a

principle of reasoning, but rather the negation and annihilation of all principle. One tells you that he has in him something which has been given him to teach what is good and evil, and this he calls his conscience or moral sense. Another changes the phrase, and calls it common sense. Another tells you that both these are dreams, that the understanding determines what is good or bad. His understanding tells him so and so; and all wise and good men have just such an understanding as his. Another tells you, he has an eternal and immutable rule of right, and then retails to you his own particular sentiments. A multitude of professors and jurists make the law of nature echo in your ears. The phrase is sometimes modified into natural right, natural equity, the rights of man. Another builds his moral system on what he calls truth, and according to him the only evil in the world is lying. The most candid of these despots are those who say openly—I am one of the elect, and God takes care to enlighten the elect as to what is good and evil; He reveals himself to me, and speaks by my mouth. But all these systems and many more are at bottom one and the same under different forms of language, the arbitrary principle, or, in other words, the principle of caprice." And their common object is to make their own opinions triumph without the trouble of comparing them with the opinions of other people. "Let a man refer his happiness or misery to an imaginary cause, and he becomes subject to unfounded loves and unreasonable hates. Superstition, charlatanism, the spirit of sect and party, repose almost entirely on blind sympathies and blind antipathies. What is history but a collection of the absurdest anomalies, the most odious persecutions? The ascetic principle attacks utility in front. The principle of sympathy neither rejects it nor

admits it, but pays no attention to it, and floats at hazard between good and evil."

The third step is to fix and determine the elements of that happiness, on which the science of morals has to rest. In the place of Paley's chapter, which Mr Leckie places at the head of all modern writings on the utilitarian side, Bentham gives a numbered list of pleasures and pains, which he regards with the fondness of a parent, and which has cost him, he says, a great labour of analysis. The simple pleasures are those of sense, of riches, of address, of friendship, of good reputation, of power, of piety, of benevolence, of malevolence, of knowledge, of memory, of imagination, and of hope; of association, and pleasures which depend on the cessation or diminution of pains. These are pleasures of relief or deliverance. The simple pains are those of privation, of sense, of mal-address, of enmity, of bad reputation, of piety, of benevolence or sympathy, of malevolence, memory, imagination and fear. The labour of preparing this list, he concludes, is dry, but its utility is great, since the whole system of morals and legislation rests on this single basis, the knowledge of pains and pleasures, and it is the only foundation of clear ideas. "The more these two catalogues are examined, the more matter for reflection they will be found to contain."

The definition of virtue follows. According to Bentham, it is simply "the sacrifice of a less interest to a greater, of a momentary to a durable, of a doubtful to a certain interest. Every idea of virtue not derived from this notion is as obscure in conception as precarious in motive." One ought not to hold utility responsible for mistakes contrary to its nature, and which it alone can rectify. If a man calculates badly, it is not arithmetic which is in fault;

it is himself. It is true that Epicurus alone of all the ancients had the merit of having known the true source of morals; but to suppose that his doctrine leads to the consequences imputed to it is to suppose that happiness may become the enemy of happiness. Every one makes himself the judge of his own utility. Such is the fact, and such it ought to be, otherwise man would not be a rational agent. He who is not a judge of what is agreeable to him is less than a child, he is an idiot. The obligation which binds men to their engagements is nothing but the perception of a superior interest.

But pleasures and pains, besides forming the basis of morals, may also be considered as sanctions, by which laws or lessons of duty are enforced. These are of four kinds — physical, moral, political, and religious. The natural or physical sanction consists of pleasures or pains attendant on actions, or a class of actions, in the ordinary course of nature. The moral sanction consists of like pleasures or pains, arising from the friendship or hatred, the contempt or esteem, of our fellow-men. It may also be called the popular sanction, the sanction of honour or of public opinion, or of the pains and pleasures of sympathy and antipathy. The legal or political sanction consists of rewards or punishments appointed by human law; and the religious, of the pleasures and pains to be expected in virtue of the threats and promises of religion. These four sanctions are sometimes rivals, sometimes allies, and sometimes enemies. Each is susceptible of error, or of applications contrary to the principle of utility.

The sole object of the legislator is to increase pleasures and prevent pains. For this end he must acquaint himself with their respective values, and the differences of sensibility on which their amount depends. The value of

a pleasure or pain depends on seven causes, its intensity, duration, certainty, and proximity, its productiveness, in leading to others, its purity, or freedom from likelihood of inducing its opposite, and its extent, or the number affected by it. Differences of sensibility depend on temperament, health, strength, corporal imperfections, degree of knowledge, strength of intellect, firmness of soul, perseverance, the bent of inclination, notions of honour, notions of religion, sentiments of sympathy, antipathies, folly or disorder of mind, and pecuniary circumstances. Secondary causes which influence it are sex, age, rank, education, habitual occupation, climate, race, government, and religious profession.

Social evils, again, which laws are meant to restrain and remedy, need to be classified, and are either of the first, second, or third order. Evils of the first order consist of direct injury, and are either primitive or derivative. Those of the second order consist of alarm and danger, resulting more widely from the action. And these may be either extended or divided, permanent or evanescent. Evils of the third order are those which extend to the active faculties of men, and throw them into a state of torpor and decrepitude. Thus, when vexations and depredations abound, industry fails along with hope, and brambles gain possession of the most fertile fields.

The whole theory of Bentham may thus be summed up in a definition of moral good, resembling that of Paley, but partly differing from it. Virtue, in his scheme, consists in each one aiming at a maximum of personal happiness, in conformity with a wise calculation of the number and intensity of pleasures or pains, and under the influence of four motives—natural consequences, the penalties and rewards of human law, the force of public opinion

social praise or blame, and the impressions of religious hope and fear.

The Utilitarianism of Mr Mill, as taught in his Essay, which gives his latest and ripest convictions, differs not a little from its previous forms. It is still maintained that utility, or the tendency of actions to produce happiness, is the only consistent and intelligible basis of all morality. But, in seeking to meet objections to the system, the ground is shifted not a little, and new positions are either secretly or openly assumed.

Besides other details, on which it is needless to dwell, there are four main features in which the moral teaching of Mr Mill diverges wholly from the older form of the doctrine of utility in Bentham's works, which he clears from alleged misconceptions, and vindicates from objections, by changing it virtually into a new and different theory.

In the first place, he renounces the principle of selfishness, and lays down beneficence, or a direct aim at the general happiness, not private advantage, as the basis and essence of the whole system. In the review of Sedgwick, he condemns Paley for the purely selfish character of his definition of virtue. Again, in his review of Dr Whewell, he blames him for confounding "the theory of motives sometimes called the Selfish System," with Bentham's "Happiness theory of Morals," and asserts that in Dr Whewell's own creed, as he infers from certain other statements, "disinterestedness has no place." Now Bentham's own view in this matter is vague and inconsistent, and oscillates from one side to another. But on the whole he seems to teach that benevolence, or a direct regard to the greatest happiness of the community, is a happy privilege of his own mental constitution and that of a few other jurists,

and that pure selfishness is the natural and necessary law of the vulgar herd of mankind. One passage to this effect has been given before from his early work. In his latest work, the *Deontology*, passages to the same effect abound. "You see the moralist," he says, "in his study dogmatize in pompous phrases on duty and duties. Why does no one listen to him? Because, while he speaks of duties, every one is thinking of interests. It is in the nature of man to think above all of his interests, and it is there that every enlightened moralist will judge that it is for his interest to begin. It is vain for him to talk and to act; duty will always give place to interest." And again, "The task of the enlightened moralist is to prove that an immoral act is a false calculation of personal interest, and that the vicious man makes a wrong estimate of pleasures and pains. Unless he does this, he does nothing; for as we have said before, it is in the nature of things that a man must labour to obtain whatever he thinks ought to procure him the greatest sum of enjoyments."

Mr Mill remarks, on the contrary, "The happiness which forms the utilitarian standard of what is right in conduct is not the agent's own happiness, but that of all concerned. As between his own happiness and that of others, utilitarianism requires him to be strictly impartial, as a disinterested and benevolent spectator. In the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility." "The social instinct," he says further, "to those who have it, possesses all the characters of a natural feeling. It does not present itself to their minds as a superstition of education, or a law despotically imposed by the power of society, but as an attribute which it would not be well for them to be without. This conviction is the ultimate sanction of the greatest-happiness morality.

This it is which makes any mind of well-developed feelings work with and not against the outward motives to care for others, afforded by the external sanctions, and when these are wanting, or act in an opposite direction, constitutes in itself a powerful internal binding force; since few but those whose minds are a moral blank could bear to lay out their course of life on the plan of paying no regard to others, except so far as their own private interest compels." He goes still further, and in the teeth of his master, who pronounces such an idea the dream of an idiot, he claims for utilitarianism a full share in the morality of self-devotion. "The utilitarian morality," he says, "does recognise in human beings the power of sacrificing their own greatest good for the good of others. It only refuses to admit that the sacrifice is itself a good. A sacrifice which does not increase, or tend to increase, the sum total of happiness, it considers as wasted." Here modern utilitarianism, in seeking to rival the morality of the Gospel without any help from religious faith, abandons its own selfishness, passes at one bound over the whole doctrine of Providence, and alights in a quagmire of mysticism on the other side.

Another feature of Mr Mill's ethical creed, by which it diverges from the view of Bentham, and even lays the axe to the root of his whole system, is the assertion of a contrast, not only in the quantity, but in the kind or quality of pleasures. It is quite compatible, he holds, with the principle of utility, to recognise the fact that some kinds of pleasure are more desirable and valuable than others. He finds the test for deciding this point in the decided preference of those who have had experience of both, and says that from this verdict of the only competent judges there can be no appeal. "On a question which is

the best worth having of two pleasures or modes of existence, the judgment of those who are qualified by knowledge of both, or if they differ, that of the majority among them, must be admitted as final." But if this be so, and the moral and intellectual pleasures are conceded to be higher in kind than those of sense, the summation, on which Bentham's whole system is founded, must become impracticable. His statement that when one has become familiar with the process, and has acquired the justness of estimate which results from it, he can compare the sum of good and evil with so much promptitude as scarcely to be conscious of the steps of the calculation, is proved to be not only untrue but impossible. It is equivalent to the assertion that a person may learn, by habit and acquired instinct, to add together lines, surfaces, and solids, weights, values, and capacities, and to form out of them one arithmetical total, on which the due conduct of his life is to depend. In fact, by this one admission, Mr Mill passes over insensibly from the camp of Epicurus to that of Aristotle and the Old Academy, who held that virtue was the chief good, and far the higher, when compared with the pleasures of sense, but still not the only good.

A third contrast appears in the view of rival systems of morality. Mr Bentham admires Epicurus alone, and treats other moralists, ancient and modern, with contemptuous scorn. "While Xenophon," he says, "was writing history, and Euclid giving instruction in geometry, Socrates and Plato were talking nonsense under pretence of teaching wisdom." Epicurus "alone of all the ancients had the merit of having known the true source of morals." But Mr Mill "does not consider the Epicureans to have been by any means faultless in drawing out their scheme of consequences," and thinks that "to do this in any

sufficient manner, many Stoic, as well as Christian elements, require to be included."

Another main difference between the earlier and later forms of the doctrine of utility consists in the degree of respect to secondary moral rules, the embodied results of human experience. The claim of Bentham, from the first page of his work, is to replace all these, as imperfect results of prejudice or forms of caprice, by calculations, based on the principle of utility, of which the data are first clearly explained by himself. His object is, first, "to establish the unity and sovereignty of the principle by rigorously excluding every other," since "it is nothing to subscribe to it in general, it must be admitted without any exception." And next, "to find the processes of a moral arithmetic, by which uniform results may be arrived at," and this "by a uniform and logical manner of reasoning." It is on this ground that one of his admirers has claimed for him to mark an era in moral philosophy, like that which Newton's discoveries have wrought in the lower field of natural science.

This high claim, in the revised system, is abandoned and almost reversed. The fancied merit, in the eyes of his ardent admirers, is even treated as a foolish calumny, due to opponents alone. Mr Bentham's knowledge of life and human nature is said to have been far too partial and limited for him to be able to apply the main principle with any approach to completeness, accuracy, and success. Common sense requires the genuine philosopher to avail himself of all the moral experience acquired in past generations. During all these ages, he says, "mankind have been learning the tendencies of actions, on which experience all the prudence and morality of life is dependent. People talk as if the commencement of this course of

experience had hitherto been put off; and as if, when a man is tempted to meddle with the property or life of another, he had to begin by considering whether murder and theft are injurious. The matter is now done to his hand, mankind must by this time have acquired positive beliefs as to the effect of some actions on their happiness. And the beliefs which have thus come down are the rules of morality for the multitude; and for the philosopher, until he has succeeded in finding better. That philosophers might easily do this, even now, on many subjects, and that mankind have much to learn as to the effects of actions on general happiness, I admit, or rather, earnestly maintain."

It is not explained how the multitude can feel themselves bound to obey rules, which rest, as they are assured, only on the imperfect miscalculations of past ages, and which their teachers, the modern philosophers, are striving to replace by a more exact arithmetic of their own. But at least the most eminent disciple in the school of Bentham has here turned his back on the claim set up by his fellow-disciples on behalf of their common teacher, when he treats it as a mere calumny, hardly worthy of notice or reply. "Gravely to argue," he continues, "as if no secondary principles could be had, and as if mankind had remained till now without drawing any general conclusions from the experience of human life, is as high a pitch, I think, as absurdity has ever reached in philosophical controversy."

The view, then, of Mr Mill, varies essentially, and in several main and distinctive features, from that elder utilitarianism, which he professes to defend, and to clear from the misconceptions of ignorant and rash assailants. The contrast is pointed out forcibly by Professor

Grote, who remarks on it, in his calm and thoughtful manner, in these words:

"I am not myself fond of positive language, nor indisposed to sympathise with qualified defence. But really I hardly see the use of defending Epicureanism or utilitarianism at all, when it has to be done with so many admissions and reservations as Mr Mill has made. They follow one upon another, and there is a sort of oscillation in the 11th page, which seems to leave the opponents in possession of almost the whole of their case. It seems that Epicureanism will not do without many Stoic and Christian elements; that utilitarian writers in general have not rightly conceived the superiority of mental pleasures to bodily; that they might with advantage have said something quite the opposite of what they have said, and which Mr Mill proceeds now to say for them. No doubt it is wise to learn from enemies, and never too late to mend. But I should have thought, in the interest of moral science, that it would be better for the reformed utilitarianism to make a fresh start under a new name, or at least to drop the old."

From this brief sketch or outline of the three chief modern varieties of utilitarian ethics, I proceed now to point out what I conceive to be their common defects, and their relative amount of failure or misconception, when compared with each other. And first, they all agree in rejecting, explicitly or implicitly, the first and highest view of moral truth, as fixed and immutable in its foundations, and resting on the essential perfection of the Divine goodness, and the true ideal of all goodness in created moral agents, as a resemblance and reflection of the Divine. This view is found in Plato, the noblest of heathen moralists, when he defines righteousness as ὁμοίωσις τῷ

Θεῷ, a resemblance or likeness to the Divinity. But it runs, like a golden thread, through every part of the Scriptures, and has been derived from these into the works of the best and soundest Christian divines and moralists in every age. Paley approaches nearest to it, where he defines virtue by obedience to the will of God. But the interval is still great, because the obligation is made to rest on will and arbitrary power alone, and not on the deeper truth, that the will is conceived to be that of One who is perfect in essential goodness. In Mr Bentham and Mr Mill the truth has no place whatever. The former ridicules it as merely one form of the many-headed "principle of caprice," or a device of certain moralists for passing on others their own private opinions. Mr Mill seems to have one faint glimpse of it, where he censures Paley for basing morality on the Divine will; but it fades swiftly from his view, and seems never to reappear.

In their treatment of the subjective aspect of morals, or the doctrine of conscience and the moral sense, there is some slight difference. None of them define or recognize it clearly, but perhaps Mr Mill approaches nearest to what I conceive to be the truth. Paley does not positively deny its existence, but leaves it an open question, and only mentions that, even if it does exist, it is so mixed with prejudices and habits, that it cannot be safely depended upon in moral reasoning. Bentham, with his usual self-confidence, scouts and derides it altogether, as a mere invention of those, who wish their own opinions to prevail without the pains of comparing them with the opinions of others. But Mr Mill recognizes a kind of moral sense, though not as primitive and underived, yet still as the necessary result of healthy training, and based on a social instinct, which is deeply rooted in the consti-

tution of human nature. The conviction in a man that there should be a harmony between his feelings and aims and those of his fellow-creatures is said to possess all the characters of a natural feeling, and that it is the ultimate sanction of the greatest-happiness morality.

Let us now pass on to the doctrine of consequences, which the three systems agree in making the ultimate and formal basis of all morality. And here it will be enough to dwell on Paley's definition of virtue, and on those which answer to it in the writings of Bentham, and in Mr Mill's revised theory.

Virtue, as we have seen, according to Paley, consists in doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness. The definition has three parts, which refer to the substance, the rule, and the motive, of human goodness or virtue. It combines all the three elements of true morality, the personal, the social, and the Divine. But the union is artificial and imperfect. They are tied, and not fused or thoroughly combined, together. The social element stands alone in the subject, the Divine in the rule, and the selfish or personal in the motive; instead of the presence of all the three elements being seen in every part, and recognized as essential to the completeness and harmony of the whole.

In each part of this definition there are two serious defects. First of all, virtue is placed in the outward acts, and exiled from its proper home, the judgments of the mind, the habits, desires, emotions, and tempers of the heart. It becomes a purely external thing. It is beneficence, and not benevolence. The personal and religious aspects of duty are overlooked. The definition has a partial range, and is confined to social morality alone.

The rule assigned has also a double fault. The will of God is presented in a naked form, simply as the authority which consists in power to reward or punish. No reference is made to that essential and supreme goodness, which is the true ground of the moral authority of the Divine commands; or to that faculty in man, whereby he discerns good and evil, and thus becomes capable of apprehending a law of duty, far nobler than physical compulsion alone.

In the motive assigned for virtuous conduct the defects are still more serious. The principle of religious faith is recognized, but it is used as the buttress and support to a doctrine of pure selfishness. Happiness, when taken in the sense previously assigned, is itself a very insufficient phrase to express the hope of the Gospel. But a more fatal error is the exclusion of the love of God and the love of men from the motives of virtuous conduct. For this infuses a poisonous element into the very heart of the Christian faith. Nowhere in the Scriptures have we any warrant for the idea that a man purely selfish in his aims, bent on securing only a large balance of private advantage, and wholly destitute of the love of God and the love of his neighbour, has any share in the special promises to the righteous and holy in the life to come.

Are these grave defects mitigated or removed in Bentham's later system? On the contrary they are nearly all retained, and even increased. In each of the three divisions there is not only a twofold, but a threefold error. Virtue is placed in the actions, not the state of the heart, and is made wholly external as before. It is confined to social action, and both self-culture and Christian or natural piety are left wholly out of view. Instead of doing good to men, the phrase in Paley's definition, we have

the maximisation of happiness. Now this substitutes an artificial attempt to carry out the results of an arithmetical calculation for the direct instinct and impulse of kindness and good will to our neighbour. The secondary or prudential process, by which the good may be practically made better, wholly swallows up the moral element.

Again, in the rule there is a threefold defect. Not only is there no reference to the divine goodness as the supreme law, or the authority of conscience, as the immediate rule, but the will of God is left wholly out of sight, and His authority is virtually superseded. It finds its place only among the sanctions, as one of four chief motives, but no part whatever of the rule, of human virtue. The only allusion to it is a brief attempt to prove that the teaching of the Bible is quite ambiguous and uncertain, and that it must depend wholly on the previous views of the interpreter to what results it will lead. The substituted rule, in Bentham's system, is itself ambiguous. We can nowhere learn clearly whether each individual is to be guided by his own private calculations of advantage, public or personal, or whether he is to follow blindly the conclusions which philosophers have drawn for him, and the instructions which they deduce from calculations more exact and profound.

The motives to virtuous conduct, in Bentham's theory, are called sanctions, and are said to be of four kinds, natural, popular, legal, and religious. The two great faults of Paley's definition are both retained. The happiness is a mere summation of pleasures, with no discrimination in their character, and the motives assigned are wholly selfish and personal, excluding alike the love of man and the love of God. But while Paley gives full prominence to the Christian hope of a life to come, and makes it

the main foundation of his theory, Bentham first reduces moral and religious motives under the category of a refined selfishness, and then degrades them to a secondary place, and assigns to them a very doubtful value. They are "more variable, more dependent on human caprices. Of the two the popular sanction is the more equal, more steady, more constantly in accordance with the principle of utility." The religious sanction is "more unequal, more apt to change with times and individuals, more subject to dangerous deviations." Instead of any preeminence in the fear and love of God above other motives, it is thrust down to the fourth and lowest place among the various incentives and inducements to virtuous action.

How far is the sixfold error of Paley's definition, increased and rendered ninefold in the rival system, retained or renewed in Mr Mill's revised form of utilitarian teaching? First, the externalism is retained. The motive, we are told (p. 27, note), when it makes no difference in the act, makes none in the morality; though, strange to say, "it makes a great difference in our moral estimation of the agent." Next, the view of good to be done is so far modified, that a higher character, and not a mere difference of quantity, is distinctly recognized in moral and intellectual pleasures. The decision of relative value is changed from Bentham's "process of moral arithmetic," reducible, in his opinion, to simple rules, to a wholly different standard, "the feelings and judgment of the experienced," p. 16. Thirdly, the restriction of virtue to social beneficence alone is partly remedied. Religious duty is still left wholly out of sight, but self-culture is included in the range of virtue. One great defect of Bentham's system is frankly acknowledged in these words. "Man is never recognized by him as a being capable of

pursuing spiritual perfection as an end; of desiring, for its own sake, the conformity of his own character to his standard of excellence, without hope of good or fear of evil from other source than his own inward consciousness. Even in the more limited form of conscience, this great fact in human nature escapes him. Nothing is more curious than the absence of recognition, in any of his writings, of the existence of conscience, as a thing distinct from philanthropy, from affection for God and man, and from self-interest in this world or the next."

By this candid acknowledgment Mr Mill tacitly abandons the system he seems to defend. For this silence of which he complains is no mere accident. It forms a necessary and logical result of the exclusive basis on which the whole scheme of his master has been reared.

Again, with regard to the rule of virtue, Mr Mill points out a real defect in Paley's standard, that he seems to make it rest on a foundation of arbitrary power alone. He ascribes, also, more weight and value than Bentham has done to secondary rules, derived from the long experience of mankind. But he leaves the question, on what principle or ground the rule of moral duty really depends, more obscure than ever. Is the revealed will of God, or is it not, any part of this rule? Does it consist in an ideally perfect calculation of results, never really made, and of which a finite understanding is incapable? Are we bound to adopt for our guide the experience of past ages, embodied in popular moral precepts, or the improved reckoning and moral arithmetic of Bentham or some other philosopher? Or must we renounce all these, and profess allegiance to no other rule than fresh calculations of our own? In this wide field of choice among slippery

alternatives, I do not see that Mr Mill gives us any help towards a fixed and clear decision.

With regard to the motives of virtue, Mr Mill avoids the common fault of Paley and Bentham, who restrict them to those of self-interest alone. But, when compared with Paley, the gain is almost balanced, or some would think, more than balanced, by an equal loss. Immortality, in his writings, may perhaps be left an open question. But in his moral system there is at least a silent exclusion of all motives derived from faith in the resurrection and the life to come. Bright hopes are there indulged of improved social arrangements, by which the range of disease shall be abridged, human life prolonged, and poverty shall disappear. As one result of these changes, the instincts of social benevolence are to become a second nature; "until by the improvement of education, the feeling of unity with our fellow-creatures shall be, what it cannot be doubted that Christ intended it to be, as deeply rooted in our character, and to our own consciousness as completely a part of our nature, as the horror of crime in a well-brought-up young person." This undoubting confidence that our Lord intended by His teaching to bring about a higher moral state of mankind, never yet attained, is the only substitute for all the usual articles of the Christian faith, including the promises of life and immortality in the gospel. This solitary recognition of the Divine Teacher, and His high moral purpose, stands out amidst a waste of absolute silence on all the truths and hopes of religion, like a lonely and stately obelisk amidst a dreary expanse of desert sand.

The revised system, then, of Mr Mill, when compared with that of Paley, is slightly less partial and defective in its statement of the subject of virtue, though it shares still

in the double fault of mere externalism, and the total omission of religious duty, or a virtual abrogation of the first and great commandment. In its rule it is still more defective, since it omits all reference to the revealed will of God, and leaves us wholly uncertain, in its doctrine of consequences, on whose calculations, whether those of modern utilitarians, of past generations of mankind, or our own, we ought to depend. In its exhibition of motives it has one very great improvement, since it discards the doctrine of pure selfishness, and includes benevolence and an acquired conscience of right and wrong. But it departs in another way further from the truth, by confining its view to the present world, and excluding practically all reference to the doctrine of immortality and the life to come.

In closing the brief review of these three modern varieties of utilitarianism, I cannot refrain from quoting once more, after Dr Whewell, a few of the striking and eloquent words of Robert Hall, a writer with few equals in eloquence, and not many superiors in vigour and clearness of thought. They are aimed partly against the system of Paley, and still more against the doctrine of Bentham, soon after their first works on the grounds of morals had both appeared.

"How is it that, on a subject on which men have thought deeply from the moment they began to think, and where consequently whatever is entirely and fundamentally new must be fundamentally false, how is it that, in contempt of the experience of past ages, and of all precedents human and divine, we have ventured into a perilous path which no eye has explored, no foot has trod; and have undertaken, after the lapse of six thousand years, to manufacture a morality of our own, to decide by a cold calculation of interest, by a ledger book of profit and

of loss, the preference of truth to falsehood, of piety to blasphemy, and of humanity and justice to treachery and blood?"

"In the science of morals we are taught by this system to consider nothing as yet done, we are invited to erect a fresh fabric on a fresh foundation. All the elements and sentiments, which entered into the essence of virtue before, are melted down, and cast into a new mould. Instead of appealing to any internal principle, everything is left to calculation, and determined by expediency. In executing this plan, the jurisdiction of conscience is abolished, her decisions classed with those of a superannuated judge, and the determination of moral causes is adjourned from the interior tribunal to the noisy forum of speculative debate. Everything is made an affair of calculation, under which are comprehended not merely the duties we owe to our fellow-creatures, but even the love and adoration which the Supreme Being claims at our hands. Everything is reversed. The pyramid is inverted, the first is last, and the last first. Religion is degraded from its preeminence into the mere handmaid of social morality, social morality into an instrument for advancing the welfare of society; and the world is all in all."

LECTURE II.

MILL'S CRITIQUE ON PALEY EXAMINED.

THE fortunes of Paley as a moralist have undergone a singular change. His work was received at first with wide and general applause. It was early accepted for a text-book in his own university, and impressed its tone on thousands of highly intelligent minds. Its clearness and general ability gained warm praise even from those who questioned the soundness of its first principles, and it reigned widely in England for near half a century, as the best modern work on ethical science. No sooner, however, was it assailed in Cambridge by the patrons of a rival school of ethics, than still heavier blows were aimed against it by those other advocates of utility and the doctrine of consequences, who might have been expected to be its friends. Utilitarianism might be dear to them, but their own political and religious theories were dearer still. The principle, highly flexible in itself, had not been used by Paley to work out that "subversive thinking," to borrow Mr Mill's own phrase, for which they chiefly prized it. He had combined it, though neither with a deep theology, nor doctrines of high prerogative, yet with a sincere faith in a diluted Christianity, and temperate attachment to

existing institutions. Hence the zealots for progress saw in him only a concealed traitor in the camp of modern philosophy, who had attempted to steal from them that powerful artillery, by which, in their own hands, a host of antiquated abuses and religious prejudices were to be overthrown.

"Philosophical controversy," Professor Grote has said, "is a worse confusion than a battle without generals or discipline, and when we come to morals and ethics, the dust and smoke become tenfold worse." Of this humbling truth the subject of this Lecture affords, I think, a striking illustration. My object in this course is to compare and analyse the chief modern varieties of the doctrine, which bases the definition of moral right and wrong on general consequences alone. For forty years since the death of Bentham, this school has been in ceaseless war with its rivals, by turns assailing and assailed. The conflict began with a vigorous and able attack on Paley's system in Professor Sedgwick's eloquent *Discourse*. He is treated with great respect, but his views are singled out for censure, because his Moral Philosophy had been the chief type of utilitarian ethics for Cambridge students. Mr Mill defends the doctrine assailed with still greater vehemence. But the first step in his defence of it is to reject wholly the claims of Paley as an utilitarian moralist, to depreciate his merits as a writer, and to load his memory with severe imputations, which have no warrant but the strength of hostile prejudice alone.

I am no admirer of Paley's moral system. I can scarcely adopt the language of Sedgwick and Coleridge, both opponents of his main principle, whose warm praise of his writings, in other respects, rather exceeds the bounds of sober truth. But the laws of fair controversy

seem to me strangely violated, when those who share his worst defect deny his intellectual merits, and impute to him, without the least proof, aims and motives of the lowest and least honourable kind. At the outset of this inquiry I think it almost due to Cambridge to show that Mr Mill's contempt for a writer, so long had in honour amongst us, is mainly due to prejudice alone. The balances in which he weighs the Christian advocate and the reforming jurist are utterly wanting in philosophical accuracy and truth. I believe also that a temperate vindication of Paley from causeless reproach may enable us to gain some light, in the course of the Lecture, on highly important questions in ethical science.

The course of Mr Mill in this matter is very strange. He begins by charging Professor Sedgwick, who has praised Paley almost to excess, with having treated him with extreme contumely, and then proceeds at once to commit the very fault he has untruly imputed to another. "Of Paley's work," he says, "we think on the whole meanly." Utilitarianism cannot fairly be judged by his system, for no one is entitled to found an argument against a system on the faults and blunders of a particular writer. What would be thought of an assailant of Christianity, who should judge of its tendency from the views of the Jesuits or the Shakers? Neither his character nor objects were those of a philosopher. He had "no single-minded earnestness for truth, no intrepid defiance of prejudice. He has a particular set of conclusions to come to, and will not allow himself to let in premises which interfere with them. When an author starts with such an object, it is of little consequence what premises he sets out from. He had not only to maintain existing doctrines but existing practices also. When an author

knows beforehand the conclusions which he is to come to, he is not likely to seek far for grounds to rest them upon."

The same charge of direct dishonesty is made a fourth time in the later review. "As for Paley," he there says, "we resign him without compunction to the tender mercies of Dr Whewell." But the wounds of Dr Whewell, who holds the doctrine of utility to be mischievous and unsound, are the piercings of a sword in direct and open controversy. Mr Mill, who advocates that principle, instead of relieving a comrade wounded in his own cause, adds the thrust of a dagger, and imputes to him once more the most dishonourable and unworthy motives. "It concerns Dr Whewell more than ourselves to uphold the reputation of a writer, who, whatever principle of morals he professes, seems to have had no object but to insert it as a foundation underneath the existing set of opinions, ethical and political; who took his leave of scientific analysis, and betook himself to picking up utilitarian reasons by the wayside, in proof of all accredited doctrines, and in defence of most tolerated practices. Bentham was a moralist of another stamp."

In these censures Mr Mill follows in the wake of Dr Bowring, who, out of jealousy for Bentham's preeminence, rails against Paley, in the *Deontology*, in a still more outrageous style. If reckless abuse of celebrated writers, whose religious creed or political leanings displease us, is genuine sunlight from the new "orb of utilitarian felicity," the sooner it sets below the horizon the better it must be, both for the honour of literature, and the peace and harmony of the world.

Let us now hear the verdict of candid opponents of Paley's moral theory on his true eminence and merit as a

writer. First, Coleridge is placed by Mr Mill side by side with Bentham, his own favourite, as one of the two "seminal minds of the age." Does he, while opposing his doctrine, think meanly of his work, or charge him with dishonesty? On the contrary he speaks of him as follows: "O, if I were fond and ambitious of literary honour, of public applause, how well content would I be to excite but one third of the admiration which in my inmost being I feel for the head and heart of Paley! How gladly would I surrender all hope of contemporary praise, could I even approach to the uncomparable force, propriety, and persuasive facility of his writings! But on this very account"—that is, not because he dealt dishonestly with Mr Mill's doctrine of utility, but because he held it at all; not because he held fast to the old prejudice of faith in Christianity, but because he pared it down to the mere proof of a life to come,—"I believe myself," he continues, "bound in conscience to throw the whole force of my intellect in the way of the triumphal car, on which the tutelary genius of modern idolatry is borne, even at the risk of being crushed under its wheels."

Such is the view of Paley's merits, which one of Mr Mill's two seminal minds deliberately held. He passes by the other seminal mind in total silence, and regards Paley as the ablest, the most effective, and the most worthy champion of the theory to which he himself is opposed. Let us now listen to that "extreme contumely," which Professor Sedgwick deals out to him in his *Discourse*, and for which he incurs Mr Mill's reproof. "I would ever wish," he says, "to speak with reverence of a man whose name is an honour to our academical body, and who did, I believe, during his time, much more for the cause of revealed truth than any other writer of his country. His

homely strength and clearness of style, and his unrivalled skill in stating and following out his argument, must ever make his writings popular. Speaking for myself, I cannot describe in terms too strong the delight I once experienced in studying his *Moral Philosophy*, where truth after truth seemed to flash upon the mind with all the force of demonstration, on questions, too, which in other hands seemed only involved in mystery and doubt. On this account, if there be a defective principle in his system, it ought boldly to be combated, lest the influence of his name and charm of his manner should lead us further from the truth."

The tender mercies of Dr Whewell, to which Mr Mill is willing to resign Paley, with some added favours of his own of a very different kind, are thus expressed. "In Paley's mode of executing his task he displayed a moderation, a shrewdness, and a pregnant felicity of idiomatic expression, which it was impossible not to admire. If the work had been entitled 'Morality, as derived from the principle of general utility,' and the principle had been assumed as evident or undisputed, the work might have been received by the world with unmingled gratitude; and the excellent sense and temper which, for the most part, it shows in the application of rules, might have produced their beneficial effect without any drawback."

Again, an early admirer and correspondent of Bentham, Mr Wilson, writes of Paley's work on its appearance, and before Bentham had published anything but the *Fragment*, in these words of high praise. "Notwithstanding some weak places, it is a capital book, and by much the best that has been written on the subject in this country. Almost everything that he says about morals, government, and our own constitution, is sound, practical, and free from

commonplace. He has got many of your notions about punishment, which I always thought the most important of your discoveries; and I very much fear, if you ever do publish on those subjects, you may be charged with stealing from him what you have honestly invented with the sweat of your own brow."

Such was the honest impression made by the work on one of Mr. Bentham's warmest admirers, when the *Theory of Legislation* was still unpublished, and when the *Moral Philosophy* had just appeared, and gone quickly through two editions.

Forty years later Sir J. Mackintosh, in his Dissertations, a writer of well-known ability, fairness, and candour, writes of Paley in these words. "This excellent writer, who, after Clarke and Butler, ought to be ranked among the brightest ornaments of the English Church in the eighteenth century, is in the history of philosophy naturally placed after Tucker, to whom, with praiseworthy liberality, he acknowledges his extensive obligation. His style is as near perfection in its kind as any in our language. Perhaps no words were ever more expressive and illustrative than those in which he represents the art of life to be that of rightly 'setting our habits.' The manner in which he deduces the necessary tendency of all virtuous actions to our general happiness from the goodness of the Divine Lawgiver is characterized by a clearness and vigour which have never been surpassed. His political principles were those generally adopted by moderate Whigs in his own age. His language on the Revolution of 1688 may be very advantageously compared to that of Blackstone, both for its precision and generous boldness."

The able and learned author of the *History of European Morals,* published only four years ago, may be a

sixth and last witness. Mr Leckie is familiar with the writings of Mr Mill and his father, and the earlier and more recent ethical literature. He belongs to the advanced liberal school, both in politics and religion, and gives his comparative estimate of Paley and Bentham in these words. "Paley's chapter on Happiness is at the head of all modern writings on the utilitarian side, being far more valuable than anything Bentham ever wrote on morals. This last writer, whose contempt for his predecessors was only equalled by his ignorance of their works, and who has added surprisingly little to moral science, considering the reputation he has attained, except a barbarous nomenclature and an interminable series of classifications, evincing no real subtlety of thought, makes, as far as I am aware, no use of the doctrine of association. In our own day it has been much used by Mr John Stuart Mill. Paley states it with his usual admirable clearness."

Thus five distinguished writers of the opposite school, Coleridge, Mackintosh, Sedgwick, Whewell, and Leckie, all seem to agree that Paley has a higher claim than Bentham to the first place among modern utilitarians. But even apart from this relative estimate of one, of whom Mr Mill thinks meanly, his blame of Professor Sedgwick for the selection he has made is ridiculous and unaccountable. His *Discourse* was expressly on the studies of the University. The writings of Paley, and not of Bentham, still less Mr Mill's revised system, then unborn, were those by which utilitarian ethics were known and obtained currency at Cambridge. However Bentham might be lauded by an inner circle of admirers, or whatever his influence among English lawyers, or foreign liberals, it is probable that Paley, at the date of the *Discourse*, had done tenfold more to secure the prevalence of the doc-

trine of expediency among the educated classes of our own land.

From Mr Mill's intellectual depreciation of Paley I pass to his more serious charge of moral dishonesty. When a critic turns aside to impute bad motives to an author of high reputation, at least his evidence ought to be clear and strong. Is it plain, then, as Mr Mill so often affirms, that Paley cared nothing for the doctrine of utility, but used it as a convenient tool for a blind conservatism, or that he betrays a fixed purpose to prop up all existing doctrines and defend existing practices, whether right or wrong? The representation is little better than a monstrous inversion of the real truth. The first feature in the work is an attack on the existing "Law of Honour." And here Sir J. Mackintosh, himself an eminent liberal statesman and philosopher, charges him with a fault the exact reverse of that which forms the burden of Mr Mill's repeated invective. He says "that Paley's strictures are excessive, because his disposition to look at his principles merely as far as they were calculated to amend prevalent vices and errors betrayed him into narrow and false views." And this description, when compared with its converse, seems rather nearer to the truth. The reason Paley expressly gives for rejecting a moral sense as his groundwork is this, that "a system of morality, built upon instincts, will only find out reasons and excuses for opinions and practices already established, and will seldom correct or reform either."

But let us enter into a few details. Mr Mill praises Bentham, as if he had been the first to lay down clearly the duty of kindness to animals. It is found in the Book of Proverbs ages before, and Paley, before any work of Bentham except the *Fragment* had appeared, lays it down

tersely and in few words. "Wanton, and what is worse, studied cruelty to brutes, is certainly wrong, as coming within one of these reasons." The chief addition Bentham has made is a seeming exaltation of Gentooism and Mahometanism above Christianity, and a characteristic charge of selfishness and tyranny, without distinction, against all past generations of mankind. In the first third of the *Moral Philosophy*, which has the largest share of general discussion, and least of detailed application, I find censure of the following malpractices or moral defects, prevalent in society: the law of honour; inequality in property, when not inseparable from the rules by which industry is encouraged and its fruits secured; abuse of the letter of law, to avoid the fulfilment of an equitable contract; concealment of faults in the sale of goods; wagers based on secret information; the prohibition of interest, with an implied censure on the laws of usury; the obedience of servants to unlawful commands of their masters, whether to conceal their frauds or forward their unlawful pleasures; the neglect of masters to restrain domestic vice; the consumption of church funds without discharge of any ecclesiastical duties; fiction and exaggeration in private conversation; pious frauds; acted lies; lies of omission; designed concealment of truth in giving evidence; all contrivances for evading the oath against bribery, which "may escape the legal penalties of perjury, but incur its moral guilt;" subscription to articles, whenever the subscriber "is not first convinced that he is truly and substantially satisfying the intention of the legislature;" all unkindness and want of consideration to domestics and dependents; and last of all the slave-trading and slave-holding of our English colonies. These were strongly denounced and

condemned by Paley, when the agitation of Clarkson and Wilberforce to abate and remove these evils had hardly yet begun.

How, then, shall we explain, in a writer usually fair and candid, repeated charges against Paley of this kind, opposed to the plainest facts? The solution is easy. Utility is a highly elastic doctrine, and is capable of assuming widely different forms. Its calculations involve so many and such complex elements, that, except in the simplest cases, the results are sure to depend on the bias in the computer's own mind. With Bentham and his first disciples, its value consisted in supplying a moral leverage for vehement assaults on existing laws and institutions, and on religious creeds, which they looked upon as worn-out superstitions, and hindrances to the progress of mankind. They undertook to regenerate society by a newly invented moral arithmetic of their own. A simple rejection of their favourite doctrine was easy to bear with silent contempt. It was a proof of mental childhood, and nothing more. But its adoption by Paley, even earlier than by their own master, and its wider currency in his hands, along with a temperate approval of the British Constitution, and an able advocacy of supernatural revelation, was like a theft of their own property, a wrong, and almost a sacrilege, hardly to be borne. The doctrine of utility might be dear to them, but its application to what Mr Mill styles candidly "subversive thinking," was dearer still. Thus Paley came naturally to be looked on with special aversion, as a traitor to the uniform he seemed to wear. He had stolen into the camp of their reforming philosophy, and striven to carry off their best artillery, and then to use it in defence of doctrines to which they were wholly opposed; that is, the general excellence and

merit of the British laws and constitution, and the Divine origin and authority of the Christian faith.

Professor Sedgwick and Mr Mill agree, then, in censuring Paley, but on very opposite grounds. The former gives him high praise in all other respects; but he sees in him the ablest and most effective teacher of the doctrine of expediency, which he thinks mischievous and debasing, and blames him strongly for this reason alone. The sole defect, in the eyes of one critic, is the one redeeming feature, grudgingly and sparingly allowed, in the view of the other. Mr Mill considers Paley to bear the like relation to orthodox and consistent utilitarians, as Jesuits or Shakers to sensible and honest Christian believers. He did not understand the doctrine he professed, and only blundered in expounding it. Of his work he thinks meanly. Its faults arise in no sense from the doctrine of utility, but from a religious element unskilfully attached to it, and from personal selfishness and insincerity, by which he made it a convenient pretext for propping up false doctrines that were in vogue, and casting a shield over existing corruptions in church and state. Such an accusation against one who was so long held in high honour at Cambridge is a public indictment against the university to which he belonged. If untrue, its falsehood ought to be exposed and repelled. The question is not whether there are serious defects in Paley's work. It is whether they arise from his acceptance of the doctrine of utility, or whether they are departures from it, and are due to his attempt to combine it with a religious element, or else to his intellectual incompetency and dishonesty of purpose alone.

The charges Mr Mill has brought against him are these. First, that he degrades utility from its rightful

place, as the source of moral obligation, making it a mere index to the will of God, and nothing more. Next, that by making that will the ultimate ground of duty, he annihilates morality, and reduces the doctrine of God's moral government to a misnomer and a delusion. Thirdly, that he makes selfishness one main element in the constitution of virtue; so that the only motive which renders an action virtuous is the hope of heaven and the fear of hell. Fourthly, that his character and objects were not those of a philosopher, but of a time-server, a modern Demetrius, resolved to justify profitable abuses, and caring little by what sophism this could be done. Fifthly, that with prevailing maxims of morals he borrowed the prevailing laxity in their application. To this bias, and not to the doctrine of utility, is ascribed his teaching on lies, subscription to articles, and abuses of political influence. Sixthly, that the considerations of expediency on which he grounds his rules are of the most obvious and vulgar kind; that the effect of actions on the formation of character is overlooked; that he had meditated little on that branch of the subject, and had no ideas on it but the commonest and the most superficial. Clear and comprehensive views upon it, Mr Mill affirms, must precede a philosophy of morals, and form its basis. The materials for this are already ample, but not complete, and much yet remains to be done. To collect them and add to them will be the labour of sound and orthodox utilitarian philosophers in successive generations. All these charges, except the second and third, I believe to be groundless and untrue; and even these are exaggerated, and so far as they are true, are faults shared equally, in one case by Mr Mill himself, and in both by the master whom, in contrast to Paley, he so highly extols. The discussion is important,

wholly apart from its bearing on Paley's personal character and the credit of his university, from the great questions it involves, which belong to the deepest foundations and the most seminal and vital principles of moral science.

I. First, utility, according to Mr Mill, is "itself the source of moral obligation." Paley degrades it from its true place, into "a mere index to the will of God," which he regards as the ultimate groundwork of all morality, and the origin of its binding force. This doctrine, that utility is an index to the Divine will and nothing else, he thinks highly exceptionable, having really many of those bad effects erroneously ascribed to the principles of utility.

Now the view of Paley on this subject combines one great merit with a great defect. The merit is that he aims to reconcile and unite all the three elements which must enter into a genuine and comprehensive scheme of morals, the personal, the social, and the divine. His system includes personal prudence, social philanthropy, and religious faith and piety. His great fault, logically, is that instead of recognizing their co-existence and joint presence in every part of the system, he isolates them from each other, assigning to each a monopoly in one part only. In his definition of the substance of virtue, the social element stands alone, in its rule or law, the religious, and in its motive, the personal. But his good sense mitigates this great defect by numerous inconsistencies, as when two whole books are given to those personal and religious duties, which the definition would exclude from any place within the range of human virtue.

This very imperfect junction, in Paley, of the three main elements of morals, his rivals avoid by committing another

fault, still greater and less excusable. They omit the most important of these elements altogether. Their moral arithmetic, to borrow Bentham's phrase, involves a series of sums with three different denominations. Of these they omit the pounds, and take note of the shillings and pence only. Or to use a higher style, more suited to the vast importance of the subject, in their systems the first great commandment of the law finds no place whatever. Their moral calculations nowhere include "the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come." The will of God, as a rule, is made a mere attendant on human forecasts of the expedient; and as a motive, under the name of the religious sanction, where it could not be wholly overlooked, it occupies the last and lowest place. The teaching of Paley is too open to the censure of Robert Hall, that "religion is degraded from its pre-eminence into the mere handmaid of social morality." Still the services of the handmaid are prized so highly, that on these the comfort and welfare of the household, and even the bonds of its union, are made to depend. In the rival systems the handmaid is dispensed with, and disappears.

A much simpler problem thus remains, how to reconcile the personal and social elements in the ethics of utility. But here the two leaders disagree. The theories of Bentham are based on one great postulate, the natural and universal selfishness of mankind. Moralists, he says, have wasted their time by talking of duties, while men are thinking of their interests, as it is proper and natural for them to do. But he claims benevolence for himself, and seems willing to share the honour with a small number of philosophers and legislators, as a happy accident. And the form of this unexplained benevolence is a diligent effort to frame laws by which men, though naturally and

properly selfish, may be kept from doing harm, or even trained to do good, to their fellow-men. But Mr Mill adopts at once, from intuitive theories, the one grand maxim, that the happiness of mankind is that greatest good, and noblest aim, which each individual is bound to pursue. He thus confines the province of utility to the detection of secondary rules, whereby to fulfil the lofty aim of universal benevolence.

But besides the greater defect in Mr Mill's own moral system, his description of Paley's doctrine is misleading and confused. For the latter clearly recognises two elements in human virtue, and ascribes each of them to a different source. Utility, or conduciveness to the good of mankind, is viewed as the definition of the goodness of actions, but the will of God as the source of their moral obligation. On the same view there are two means by which our knowledge of right action may be gained, the revealed commands of God, or reasoning on their consequences. The connecting link is our knowledge, by à posteriori evidence, of the Divine benevolence. In one case we learn directly the moral obligation from the revealed command of God, and infer the goodness. In the other case, we learn or reason out the goodness directly, and infer the moral obligation. But in Mr Mill's exposition the contrast, so clearly marked in Paley's scheme, is wholly lost sight of; and a defective view of moral obligation is confounded with something wholly different, the dependence of virtue or moral goodness, in its very nature and essence, on arbitrary acts of the Divine will.

The second charge, and one of the most important, is in these words:

"The only view of the connection between religion and morality, which does not annihilate the very idea of

the latter, is that which considers the Deity as not making, but recognising and sanctioning, moral obligation. Why should I obey my Maker? From gratitude? Then gratitude is in itself obligatory, independently of my Maker's will. From reverence and love? But why is He a proper object of love and reverence? Not because he is my Maker. If I had been made by an evil spirit for evil purposes, my love and reverence would have been due, not to the evil, but to the good Being. Is it because He is just, righteous, merciful? Then these attributes are in themselves good, independently of His pleasure. If virtue would not be virtue unless the Creator commanded it, if it derive all its obligatory force from His will, there remains no ground for obeying Him except His power; no motive for morality except the selfish one of the hope of heaven, or the selfish and slavish one of the fear of hell."

This censure is just and true in substance, though not wholly in form. It singles out a grave and serious defect in Paley's ethical system. Mr Mill here rises for once above the low marshy ground of his sensational philosophy and utilitarian ethics, and takes his stand, to condemn Paley, on the higher level of Plato and Cudworth, or of eternal, immutable, and intuitive morality. The mere will of a Superior, even if that Superior be almighty and supreme, does not satisfy the requirements of conscience as the ultimate basis or test of right and wrong. The conception of Divine Goodness is deeper and more central than that of Almighty Power. All the declarations of Scripture on the moral perfections of God are robbed of their whole force, and become simply delusive, if good and evil were arbitrary creations, reversible at His pleasure who had first appointed them. The attribute of bare, naked power, would then swallow up the still higher attributes of good-

ness and wisdom, and the question of the patriarch become an unmeaning folly—"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

But while the main idea in the criticism is true and important, and rises to a higher point of view than Mr Mill usually attains, it is weighted and obscured, as an ethical statement, by three serious errors. The charge here made applies really with as much force to the objector's own view. It is enforced by a total misstatement of the facts with regard to previous writers, and by a hypothetical case, revolting in sound, ambiguous in meaning, and in the only reasonable sense of the words impossible and untrue.

The charge against Paley is that he assumes too low and imperfect a ground for moral obligation, the will of God, with no reference beyond to the moral character or goodness of that Will. The objector bases it on utility, or the conduciveness of actions, in their results and consequences, to the happiness of mankind. But this basis is vague and ambiguous, and needs to be more clearly defined. The consequences on which morality is founded may be either total and complete, or foreseen and partial, or possible and conjectural, or necessary and inevitable, or natural only, discerned by observation from the actual constitution of the world. The first would make all knowledge of right impossible, except for prophets gifted with omniscience. The two next would make it depend on the measure of human ignorance, and degrade all moral judgments into mere uncertain guess work. Two alternatives remain, that the consequences, which form the true basis of morals, and determine the utility of actions, are necessary and inevitable, or simply natural. If necessary, this implies moral distinctions in the tempers or actions them-

selves, from which kindred results follow, and this through no positive appointment or decree, but φύσει, or by the essential and unalterable nature of things. We are thus landed in the region of a morality immutable and eternal, a fixed and inseparable element in all created intelligence, reflecting that law of essential goodness in the Creator, which is higher and deeper than the active energy of will. Utilitarianism, as a theory, will expire, because the consequences are only the imperfect and dim reflection of a character which must have preexisted, before the results could follow. It will resolve itself into the old message of the prophet—"Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him, for he shall eat the fruit of his doings." To retain the objector's theory, we are thus shut up to the hypothesis that the consequences spoken of are natural, but not necessary; that they do not flow inevitably from the moral nature of the acts, but are only found by experience to be attached to them in the actual constitution of human affairs. In other words, that they are positive appointments of the Divine will. Whoever believes in God at all must believe that the actual state of society and of human life, so far as it does not include laws and relations immutable in their own nature, or a kind of moral geometry, discerned by the Supreme Wisdom, but not created by the Supreme Will, must be due to the choice and appointment of that Will of God. The conclusion is plain and inevitable. Utilitarianism proper shares the main fault of Paley's doctrine, and adds to it another of its own. The former view seems to base moral obligation, simply and directly, on arbitrary power. In the theory of Dr Brown it is based on the same, indirectly, through a positive and arbitrary appointment of the emotions which certain kinds of actions are made to excite in the human

heart. In the utilitarian creed the arbitrary power operates still more indirectly, by positive arrangements of the consequences of actions, as well as of the emotions with which men are taught to regard them. Thus Paley's scheme is based simply on arbitrary power, and that of Mill and Bentham on the same arbitrary will, but concealing itself in ambush behind the laws of nature, so as to be really a perpetual fraud on the reason of mankind.

Again, the censure is accompanied with the following historical remark.

"In the minds of most English thinkers, down to the middle of last century, the idea of duty and that of obedience to God were so indissolubly united as to be unseparable even in thought. And when we consider how in those days religious motives and ideas stood in the front of all speculations, it is not wonderful that religion should have been thought the essence of all obligations to which it annexed its sanction. To have inquired, Why am I obliged to obey God's will? would to a Christian of that age have appeared irreverent. It is a question, however, which as much as any other requires an answer from a Christian philosopher."

Here we are told that the strength of religious faith, down to the middle of last century, among English thinkers, rendered clear ideas of morality impossible. The great question of the relation between moral obligation and the Divine will, could not even be proposed. It seems implied that moral insight has increased through the weakened power of religious faith and reverence on the minds of men. But the assertion is palpably and even ridiculously untrue. Few subjects have been more frequently touched upon by Christian philosophers and divines, both in our own and other lands. Hooker speaks

of it in those noted words,—"The perfection which God is, giveth perfection to that he doeth." It is discussed at some length, and with more accuracy and insight than Mr Mill, from his point of view, could bestow upon it, in Baxter's *Reasons of the Christian Religion.* It forms the main idea in Cudworth's celebrated treatise on *Immutable Morality.* It enters largely into the writings of John Smith, More, Clarke, and other moralists of that age. And, unless English divines lay under some special paralysis of thought beyond their predecessors, the aspersion is disproved by Mr Mill's own statement in the footnote of his latest work (*Examination of Sir W. Hamilton,* p. 175) where he remarks on a treatise of Mr Ward: "I think his book of great practical worth by the strenuous manner in which he maintains morality to have another foundation than the arbitrary decree of God, and shows, by a great weight of evidence, that this is the orthodox doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church." What contradiction can be more complete? How can there be an orthodox doctrine of the Romish Church in one special solution of a great question, which Christian Divines, down to the middle of last century, out of false reverence never ventured to propose?

A startling assertion follows. "If any person has the misfortune to believe that his Creator commands wickedness, more respect is due to him for disobeying such imaginary commands than for obeying them." When a writer uses words revolting and unnatural to pious ears, and puts a case when it might be a merit, in his eyes, to disobey our Creator, we have a right to claim at least that he shall avoid ambiguous terms, and rigorously define his true meaning. But here the words are so ambiguous, that it is hard to say what Mr Mill really means. First,

by wickedness we must certainly understand particular acts, or a course of conduct, thought to be wicked. The error or misfortune may refer to any one of those alternative opinions. First, that certain acts are held to be commanded by God, when the command is a false imagination, and they are really wicked. Secondly, that things are commanded, and thereby rendered a duty, which would have been wicked, apart from special Divine command. Thirdly, that certain acts are believed to be wrong and wicked, even while it is also believed that God has commanded them to be done. In the first case, there can be no merit in disobeying the voice of conscience, even when it is diseased and defiled. The only doubt must be which of two alternatives is the greater evil. The second case includes a large class of actions, at least conceivable, which would be wrong without an express command of God, but which, if so commanded, might be proofs of the strongest faith and greatest virtue. Such, for instance, was the sacrifice of Isaac, a crowning act in a long course of triumphant faith, followed by a glorious recompence. The third case is one neither of merit nor demerit in either course of conduct, but of mental lunacy. He who can believe that the Supremely Good has commanded acts which he at the same time reckons still to be wicked, must be more fit for an asylum, than to be set up by any sensible moralist as capable of acquiring merit either by obedience or disobedience to a judgment so diseased.

III. A third error and fault of Paley is given in these words.

"In strict consistency with this view of the nature of morality, Paley represents the motive to virtue, and the motive which constitutes it virtue, as consisting solely in the hope of heaven, and the fear of hell. It does not

follow that he believed mankind to have no feelings except selfish ones. He doubtless would have admitted that they are acted upon by other motives, or in the language of Bentham and Helvetius, have other interests than merely self-regarding ones. But he chose to say that actions done from those other motives are not virtuous. The happiness of mankind, according to him, was the end for which morality was enjoined; yet he would not admit anything to be morality, when the happiness of mankind, or of any one except ourselves, is the inducement to it. He annexed an arbitrary meaning to the word virtue. How he came to think this the right one may be a question. Partly, perhaps, by the habit of thinking and talking of morality under the metaphor of a law. In the notion of law the idea of the command of a superior, enforced by penalties, is of course the main element."

The blame here is in substance deserved. The selfish motive of virtue, in Paley's teaching, was one standing complaint of the opponents of utilitarianism, from Gisborne and Robert Hall, through Mackintosh and Sedgwick, down to Mr Leckie and Professor Blackie in the present day. Mr Mill could not fail to seize on a topic so familiar. Thus Mackintosh remarks that "it is a necessary consequence of Paley's proposition, that every act which flows from generosity or benevolence is a vice. So also of every act of obedience to the will of God, if it arises from any motive but a desire of the reward He will bestow. It must be owned," he continues, "that this excellent and most enlightened man has laid the foundations of religion in a more intense and exclusive selfishness than was avowed by the Catholic enemies of Fenelon, when they persecuted him for his doctrine of pure and disinterested love of God." And Professor Sedgwick remarks to the same effect,

"Virtue becomes a question of calculation, a matter of profit and loss; and if a man gain heaven at all on such a system, it must be by arithmetical details, the balance of his moral ledger. A conclusion such as this offends against the spirit breathing in every page of the book of life, yet is it fairly drawn from the principles of utility."

The main fact, then, is admitted, but two questions remain. Is the fault of Paley really so gross as some of these strictures imply? Has Mr Mill any right to blame Paley and his other censors with equal severity, and to charge those with extreme ignorance who, like Professor Sedgwick, ascribe the fault to the doctrine of utility as its proper and natural source? I believe it may be shown that Paley's doctrine, when his own expositions of it are allowed, differs not very widely from what Bentham's theory becomes, after it has received Mr Mill's latest improvements; and, with all its serious defects, is perhaps one degree nearer to the full and perfect truth.

The words of Paley's definition would certainly warrant the strange conclusion drawn from them by Mackintosh and Mr Mill, if strictly taken, and if they stood alone. But they do not stand alone. In expounding his very faulty view of the meaning of moral obligation, he clears himself from the natural charge of really meaning to include the selfish motive in the proper definition of virtue. "As we should not be obliged," he says, "to obey the laws or the magistrates, unless rewards or punishments, pleasure or pain, depended on our obedience, so neither should we, without the same reason, be obliged to do what is right, to practise virtue, or to obey the commands of God." Here, plainly, what is right, virtue, and the commands of God, are distinguished from and contrasted with the "violent motive" by which they are

enforced, and which he confounds with moral obligation. Thus his real error clears him from another, which the words of his definition might seem to imply. And this is made still more plain from his remark on habitual virtue, in which he states a natural objection to the definition he has proposed, and gives his own solution. "A man," he says, "may in fact perform many an act of virtue, without having either the good of mankind, the will of God, or everlasting happiness in his thought. How is this to be understood? In the same manner as a man may be a very good servant, without being conscious, at every turn, of a particular regard to his master's will, or an express attention to his interest. Indeed your best old servants are of this sort. But then he must have served for a length of time under the direction of these motives, to bring it to this; in which service his merit and virtue consist."

The faulty wording, then, or wrong name of Paley's definition, seems to have disguised from hasty observers his real doctrine, which may be thus explained. Virtue is properly defined by utility, or the better phrase of "doing good to mankind." But of this virtue two species are recognized, one formed or habitual, the other in active process of formation. The starting-point assumed is the natural and universal desire for personal happiness. But this instinct of self-love needs to be "moralized," or trained by outward motives in the needful direction of beneficence or social kindness. Paley introduces the promises of religion, or the hope of eternal happiness, as the great moralizing power. Hence he remarks presently,—"Such as reject the Christian religion are to make the best shift they can to build up a system, and lay the foundation of morality, without it. But it ap-

pears to me a great inconsistency in those who receive Christianity, and expect something to come of it, to endeavour to keep all such expectations out of sight in their reasonings on human duty."

The doctrine of Paley, thus explained by his own words, will be found to differ but little from Mr Mill's professed improvement on Bentham's theory. The second thoughts or more complete thinking, by which the latter would remedy what he calls the incomplete thinking of the teacher he extols, bring him really very near to the position assumed before his birth by the writer of whom he thinks meanly, and whose motives and character he defames. The starting-point of mere self-love, or man's instinctive desire for personal happiness, is common to them all. The description of virtue, as mainly consisting in outward actions directed to the general happiness, is common to them also. A third principle they all receive is that instinctive self-love needs to be trained by outward motives and sanctions into the higher form of instinctive benevolence. The self-love, however, common to the three writers, is left by Bentham in its bare and naked form of worldly, selfish prudence. He ridicules the notion that men should be expected to be influenced by duty, and not by self-interest alone. This worldly selfishness Paley professes to elevate and transform, retaining his utilitarianism, by religious faith and the hopes of a future life; and Mr Mill, without any such aid, by stealthily introducing, from intuitive morals, a fundamental duty of universal benevolence. It is taught by Paley, no less clearly than by himself, that personal happiness consists to a great extent in the exercise of social affections. These hold the first place in his list of the elements which compose it. He states no less

plainly, as one chief end of moral training, the formation of virtuous habits, which act without the need of immediate reference to those ideas of personal advantage, to which their formation is due. He views these habits, like Mr Mill, as gaining the force of a second nature. These principles are common to both, though Paley has stated them, perhaps, with greater brevity and clearness.

What, then, are the chief differences between Mr Mill's improvement of Bentham's incomplete thinking, and the doctrine of this rival, of whom he thinks so meanly? There are two of main importance. Paley, like Bentham, disclaims all distinction in pleasures, except continuance and intensity. Mr Mill admits one of quality also, or that some are in kind of superior worth. He thus becomes a better moralist, but a less consistent utilitarian. His only decisive superiority over Paley is where he falls short of him in logical consistency, and patches a Stoic or Academic element upon the old garment of an Epicurean creed. He also unconsciously deals a death-blow to his master's favourite doctrine. For by this one change Bentham's "moral arithmetic" is turned into a summation of incommensurables, and must come to an end.

The other difference is of high importance, and one where the balance is wholly on Paley's side. The moralizing sanction, whereby selfish prudence is to be trained into virtue, Mr Mill expects to find in certain undefined reforms in human legislation. Philosophers, to whom benevolence is either, as Bentham claims for himself, a happy accident, or else, as Mr Mill affirms, a fundamental and intuitive first principle, are to train a race of better statesmen. These are next to form better laws, by which the feeling of unity with our fellow-creatures "shall become as completely a part of our character, as the horror

of crime in a well brought up young person." By this means disease will be abated, and poverty extinguished. A long succession of generations may perish in the breach, but at length men will gain the desired victory, and owe it entirely to themselves.

Now Paley, with all his faults, places his reliance for moralizing power on the Christian hope of the life to come. The manner in which he introduces this higher element is very imperfect and faulty. It needs to be freed from a forced union with mere utilitarianism, before it can be seen in its true light, or escape that reproach of selfishness which clearly lies against it in its present form. But in itself it is a higher and nobler element than can be found in any scheme, which reduces virtue to a disguised and transformed selfish interest, and then confines the interests, which form its secret basis, to the present mortal life alone. No moral science, worthy of the name, can exist, so long as the generations of men are viewed only as like the leaves of the forest, which are born, wither, and die in swift succession, and then in death pass away for ever.

LECTURE III.

MILL'S CRITIQUE ON PALEY.

EXAMINATION CONTINUED.

THE strictures of Mr Mill, in an early review forty years ago, on Paley's character and motives, may seem at first sight hardly to deserve or repay a present notice in Lectures on Moral Philosophy. They are in themselves a solitary wave in a vast tide of ethical controversy, which has lasted for more than two thousand years. But several reasons conspire to give them present importance, and justify me in submitting them to a careful review. The work of Paley, so vehemently disparaged, was long a text-book in this university. It is one of the ablest developments of that doctrine of utility, of which Mr Mill is the present champion. His attack dates almost at the transition from its long honour and influence, here in Cambridge, to its comparative neglect. The censures are aimed with equal vehemence against Paley himself, and those who were seeking to replace his views by what they believed to be a better and higher creed in morals. The great reputation Mr Mill has since acquired, the adoption of three of his books in the Cambridge course of moral studies, where that of Paley is now omitted, the later reprint of these ethical reviews, and the present

likelihood of their wide circulation and influence among Mr Mill's collected works, and the assault there made, not only on Paley and his opponents, but the whole moral teaching of the university, make it almost a duty for me, in my present office, to submit them to an exact scrutiny. This year, for the first time, the subject has become historical. Mr Mill, the severe critic of our Cambridge moralists, and Professor Sedgwick, the last survivor of those assailed, have both passed away. I propose, then, to devote some further space to this assault of Mr Mill on Paley and his university, before I review his contrasted eulogy on Bentham's character and labours. The criticism is as follows:

"If Paley's ethical system is thus unsound in its foundations, the spirit which runs through the details is no less exceptionable. There is none of the single-minded earnestness for truth, whatever it may be, the intrepid defiance of prejudice, the firm resolve to look all consequences in the face, which the word philosopher supposes, and without which nothing worthy of note was ever accomplished in moral or political philosophy. One sees throughout that he has a particular set of conclusions to come to, and will not, perhaps cannot, allow himself to let in any premises which would interfere with them. His book is one of a class which has since become very numerous, and is likely to become more so, an apology for common-place. Not to lay a solid foundation, and erect an edifice over it, suited to its professed ends, but to construct pillars, and insert them under the existing structure, was Paley's object. He took the doctrines of practical morals which he found current. Mankind were, about that time, ceasing to consider mere use and wont, and even the ordinary special pleading from texts of

Scripture, as sufficient warrant for these common opinions, and were demanding something like a philosophic basis for them. This basis Paley, consciously or unconsciously, made it his endeavour to supply. The skill with which his work was adapted to supply this want of the time accounts for the popularity which attended it, notwithstanding the absence of that generous and inspiring tone, which gives so much of their usefulness, as well as of their charm, to the writings of Plato and Locke and Fenelon, and which mankind are accustomed to pretend to admire, whether they really respond to it or not."

"When an author starts with such an object, it is of little consequence what premises he sets out from. In adopting the principle of utility, Paley, we have no doubt, followed the convictions of his intellect; but if he had started from any other principle, we have as little doubt that he would have arrived at the very same conclusions....He had not only to maintain existing doctrines, but to save the credit of existing practices also. He found in his country's morality, especially its political morality, modes of conduct universally prevalent, and applauded by all persons of consideration, which being acknowledged violations of great moral principles, could only be defended as cases of exception, resting on special grounds of expediency; and the only expediency it was possible to ascribe to them was political expediency, or conduciveness to the interests of the ruling powers. To this, and not to the principle of utility, is to be ascribed the lax morality of Paley, justly objected to by Mr Sedgwick, on the subject of lies, subscription to articles, abuses of influence in the British constitution, and various other topics. The principle of utility leads to no such conclusions: if it did, we should not of late years have heard so

much in reprobation of it from all manner of persons, and from none more than from the sworn defenders of those very malpractices."

It would be hard to compress within the same space a larger amount of indirect calumny, and inversion of plain facts, of groundless assumptions, and contradictions of Mr Mill's own principles and later admissions, than these sentences contain. His zeal to defame an author, whom for some reason or other he specially dislikes, has made him furnish an instructive example of the blinding power of determined prejudice, even on powerful and intelligent minds.

To see the true question at issue, we must remember how the controversy arose. Professor Sedgwick, in his able and eloquent *Discourse on the Studies of Cambridge*, was naturally led to dwell on the place of honour given to Paley's *Moral Philosophy*. He gives him high praise for his clearness of style, unrivalled skill in stating and unfolding an argument, and his various services, in his other works, to the cause of revealed truth. He speaks of the strong delight he had early felt in reading the work he now condemns. But he blames Paley's moral teaching for the doctrine of utility or general consequences, on which the whole is based. He thinks it unsound in reasoning, the parent of a lax morality, and degrading in its effect on the temper and conduct of those who adopt it. Mr Mill, a youthful admirer of Bentham, and fresh from his influence, was filled with indignation at this attack on the principle he and his master approved. He tells the Professor that it is peculiarly unbecoming for him to give an opinion on it, because of his "extreme ignorance," that he is only master of a few stock phrases, knows nothing of the principle but

the name, and has never seriously thought upon it. In one or two cases he says that the Professor neither understands Paley nor his conclusions. But though he seems to claim a monopoly in the privilege of fault-finding, he goes even much further than the Professor in Paley's condemnation. If the *Discourse* chastises him with whips, the critic chastises him with scorpions. He allows him grudgingly, as almost his sole merit, a sincere faith in that doctrine of utility, which Professor Sedgwick views as his one great defect. But he labours to show that he did not understand it aright, and used it as a mere pretext to justify the defence of abuses, and that all the lax morality in his writings is to be explained by his low and unworthy motives and his personal dishonesty alone.

Such a charge, against one of Paley's eminence, ought never to be brought by a critic who cares for his own reputation, unless it can be sustained by clear and strong proof. But of such proof Mr Mill does not offer a single word. To borrow one of Bentham's phrases, it is a case of pure ipsedixitism. Mr Mill bases a very bitter and extreme calumny on his own unproved conjectures and impressions alone. Such a mode of commencing an ardent defence of the doctrine of utility, by vehement abuse of the writer who had done more than any other, in the previous generation, to secure its acceptance among the general British public, is a problem that needs to be explained. Only one solution, I think, is possible. In politics, Paley was a temperate reformer, but opposed to rash and violent change. In religion, though his theology, at least in his earlier years, was meagre and very imperfect, he was an able defender of Theism and of Christianity. It would seem that, in Mr Mill's eyes, esteem for the existing laws and constitution of England, however tem-

perate, and the public defence of Christianity as a supernatural message, however calm and unimpassioned, were proofs of blind prejudice and selfish dishonesty, which far outweighed the merit of a sincere adoption and able exposition of the utilitarian theory.

To condemn one great defect in Paley's teaching, Mr Mill, I have shown before, deserts his own principles, and adopts for the moment the higher standpoint of Plato and Cudworth, and intuitive moralists. To depreciate his personal character he repeats the same process, and sets up a moral standard at total variance with the utilitarian theory. Paley, he assures us, was no philosopher. He had none of that single-minded earnestness for truth, that intrepid defiance of prejudice, that firm resolve to look all consequences in the face, which the word implies. Now the name implies nothing of the kind. It excludes indeed, in strictness of speech, all who hold the creed of Lessing, adopted and praised by Sir W. Hamilton, and justly condemned elsewhere by Mr Mill, that searching after truth is better and more important than truth itself. Such persons, whatever their learning or ability, are philogymnasts, not philosophers. By their own confession they are lovers of intellectual exercise rather than of truth and wisdom. But the word defines nothing as to the amount of outward sacrifice, or intrepid defiance of popular prejudice, required in the publication of unpopular truths. It is one thing to be a philosopher, and another to be a hero or a martyr.

The definition of Mr Mill finds as little warrant in history as in etymology. There have been countless martyrs to religious faith, but very few indeed to philosophical theories. And unbelieving philosophers especially, with few exceptions, from earliest times to the

present day, have been more remarkable for prudent compliance with the religious practices or prejudices that have surrounded them, and for cautious and systematic silence in questions of religious faith, than for intrepid and open defiance of opinions or usages which in their secret thoughts they reject and despise. Least of all can we expect an intrepid disregard and defiance of consequences to mark the advocates of an utilitarian theory. When one of these lays down for a law of duty to his fellow utilitarian a manly indifference to all consequences in the cause of truth, and imputes to him failure in this duty as a scandal and almost a crime, we may well hold up our hands in silent amazement.

If Paley was no philosopher in Mr Mill's sense of the word, he never claimed to be. We must look to another senior wrangler, forty years later, Henry Martyn, for the still higher gifts of the Christian hero and martyr. But if his character and motives were not the highest and noblest of all, at least he was gifted with modesty and common sense. He did not aim, like Bentham, to sweep away as mere rubbish the thoughts of all previous moralists, and the experience of all past generations, and to erect from its foundations a stuccoed building of ethics and politics by a new moral arithmetic of his own discovery. He did not even aspire, like Mr Mill, to remedy by his "complete thinking" the incompleteness of a master, whom he has placed in the vanguard of human progress, as the foremost thinker of the most enlightened age. He never pretended to belong to some select coterie or mental aristocracy, who look on themselves, in the words of Mackintosh with regard to Bentham's early disciples, as "initiated into the most secret mysteries of philosophy, and entitled to look down with pity, if not contempt, on the profane multi-

tude," the general herd of mankind. His real object has been clearly defined in his own preface. It was to produce a work on morals, in which "the principle should be sound, distinctly explained, and sufficiently adapted to real life and actual situations;" which should be free from a merely sententious, apophthegmatic style, and in which the defect should be avoided of entirely separating the laws of nature from the lessons, precepts, and sanctions of the Christian faith. The personal motives he assigns have nothing grand or heroic, but they are not mean or mercenary, and bear the plainest signs of a sincerity free from pretence. "The nature," he says, "of my academical situation, a great deal of leisure since my retirement from it, the recommendation of an honoured friend, the authority of the prelate to whom these labours are inscribed, the not perceiving in what way I could employ my time and talents better, and my disapprobation, in literary men, of the fastidious indolence which sits still because it disdains to do *little*, were the considerations that directed my thoughts to this design."

It needs the eyes of a lynx, or the skill of a Zoilus, to find here any trace of that corrupt and dishonest purpose, which the review imputes so freely to the whole work. Those who see most clearly the real defects of the *Moral Philosophy*, and the serious fault of the principle on which the whole system is based, are doubly bound to vindicate the memory of a great and able writer, when attacked by groundless calumnies. And still more, when through Paley shafts of bitter reproach are aimed against a whole university, while the assailant shares fully in one main defect of Paley's morality, and adds to it another and still greater of his own.

Next, is it true that the *Moral Philosophy* is "an apology for commonplace"? The charge is more than untrue; it is even ridiculous. Perhaps no work on morals ever bore more plainly the stamp of the writer's individual mind, both in its excellencies and defects. None has succeeded more in giving an air of novelty and freshness even to old and familiar truths. No sooner had it appeared than a friend and warm admirer of Bentham writes to him on the work, and describes it in these words. "It is a capital book, and much the best that has been written on the subject in this country. Almost everything he says about morals, government, and our own constitution, is sound, practical, and free from commonplace." His chief fear is that, by its originality, it will have forestalled with the public what he holds to be the most important of Bentham's ideas; and through his delay to print, may expose him to the charge of stealing what he had honestly invented with the sweat of his own brow. And again Mr Leckie, one of the ablest and best-read students of ethical literature, well acquainted with Mr Mill's writings, deliberately ranks Paley's chapter on Happiness in the *Moral Philosophy* above anything that either Bentham or Mr Mill himself has written on the utilitarian side.

The charge, then, of commonplace, if applied to the style and method of the work, is untrue and even ridiculous. Does it apply justly to the conclusions or moral verdicts themselves? Certainly Paley did not aspire to effect an entire revolution in the usual views of moral duty, or to create a wholly new starting-point in the ethical and political history of mankind. Such arrogant dreams might be entertained by Bentham and a few of his more thorough disciples. Paley was so far common-

place that he did not share in this want of modesty and common sense. Mr Mill wrote his critique on Sedgwick and Paley, "calidus juventâ," when he was only twenty-eight years old, just three years after Bentham's death. His remarks are naturally tinged by the arrogance of the school in which he had been reared, and which he outgrew to some extent, with wider study and growing experience, in his later years. But the character of that school has been forcibly described by Professor Blackie in these words:

"Never was a system ushered in with a greater flourish of trumpets, and a more strong consciousness on the part of its promulgators that a new gospel was being preached, which was to save the world at last from centuries of hereditary mistake. At the watchword of the system the son of a London attorney 'felt the scales fall from his eyes.' All was now clear that had hitherto been dim. A distinct test was revealed for marking out by a sharp line a domain, where, previous to the arrival of the great discriminator, all had been mere floating clouds, shifting mists, and aerial hallucinations. The unsubstantial idealism of Plato, and the unreasonable asceticism of the New Testament, were destined at length to disappear. Only let schools be established, and the redemption of the world from imaginary morality and superstitious sentiment would be complete....One of Bentham's most admiring disciples actually believed and printed that his discovery of the principle of utility marked an era in moral philosophy as important as that achieved in physical science by Newton's discovery of the principle of gravitation. The dogmatism, which was the characteristic feature of Bentham, was inherited, more or less, by most of his disciples; and the importance they attribute to themselves and their own

discoveries is only surpassed by the superciliousness with which they ignore whatever has been done by their predecessors."

Here, then, in the view of Mr Mill, when a young man fresh from the school of Bentham, was a second great fault of Paley as a moralist. Here lay the proof of his corrupt motives, and practical dishonesty. He used the doctrine of consequences, chiefly to unite together and justify moral rules and precepts existing before, and already sanctioned by the general acceptance of mankind. He did not clear the ground from all the rubbish of past generations, in order to build a moral structure wholly or almost wholly new. He was content to "insert pillars under existing doctrines," when these should rather have been carted away. Thus only, by the labour of some modern Mulcibers, might a perfect and glorious moral edifice

> Rise like an exhalation, with the sound
> Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet,

to bless the waiting and expectant eyes of the coming generations of mankind.

In his *Treatise on Utilitarianism*, twenty-six years later than the review, but shortly after its republication, Mr Mill lays down an opposite doctrine. Defenders of utility, he says, are often called upon to reply to the objection that there is not time, previous to action, for calculating the effects of any line of conduct on the general happiness. His answer is that there has been ample time, the whole duration of the human species. "During all that time mankind have been learning the tendencies of actions by experience. People talk as if, at the moment a man is tempted to meddle with the property or the life of another, he had to begin considering

whether murder and theft are injurious. The matter is now done to his hand. It is whimsical to suppose that, if utility be the test, mankind would remain without any agreement what is useful, and take no measures for having their notions taught to the young, and enforced by law and opinion. To consider the rules of morality as improvable, is one thing; to test every individual act by the first principle, and omit all intermediate rules, is another. Men ought to leave off talking this kind of nonsense on morals only, which they would not listen to on other subjects." "Gravely to argue as if no such secondary principles could be had, and as if mankind had remained till now without drawing any general conclusions from the experience of human life, is as high a pitch, I think, as absurdity has ever reached in philosophical controversy."

The contrast between the early censure of Paley and this later palinode is very complete. Utilitarians, it is found out at length, had never dreamed of doing what Paley has been charged with dishonesty for not having attempted to do. Once it was his grand offence to have inserted pillars under existing structures, and propped up, by the doctrine of utility, the received moral convictions of mankind; instead of labouring, with intrepid defiance of prejudice, and disregard of consequences, to clear them away, and start afresh. But now it has become the extreme pitch of controversial absurdity, to think that any sober utilitarian ever thought of doing what Paley is reproached for not having done, or had dared to disparage that commonplace morality, which is nothing less than the embodied experience of long ages of mankind. Professor Grote has noted this reversed attitude of Mr Mill in his later treatise with his usual calmness and good sense, and still with a slight touch of gentle satire, in these words:

"The utilitarian view, which made people suspicious, was that mankind had almost everything to learn in morals; and that, as a 'temporis partus maximus,' there was born a philosophy, which would immediately teach what had till then been unknown. So far as we allow, in testimony of what is useful and good, the past experience and practice of mankind, we make a morality which, whatever its merits, is historical rather than distinctively rational—*a morality which it was the main purpose of Bentham's life to cause people to distrust.* If utilitarianism has not taught us something new about these moral rules derived from tradition and experience, what has it done, and why has it given itself a special name? Does the name denote something which people have always been, or something which some have lately begun to be? If it is to resolve itself into nothing more than that we are to consider that 'the received code of ethics is not of divine right,' that in fact we are not to let our moral judgment sleep in reliance on custom and tradition, but to keep it always vigorous and awake, it certainly deserves no blame. But I scarcely see what there was or is in it to support, or who will oppose it."

So much for Mr Mill's consistency in his charge against Paley of moral commonplace; that is, as explained later by himself, his attaching due weight to received moral rules, the result of the experience and wisdom of long ages of mankind. But it is worthy of notice that two eminent writers, equal to Mr Mill in ability, and in dignity of moral teaching very superior, have blamed Paley on grounds precisely opposite. Sir J. Mackintosh, in his Dissertation, says that he was betrayed into a serious error "by his disposition to look at his principles merely as far as they are calculated to amend prevalent vices and

errors." And Robert Hall plainly includes his work, as well as Bentham's, in his indignant appeal. "How is it that on a subject on which men have thought deeply from the moment they began to think, and where consequently whatever is entirely and fundamentally new must be fundamentally false—how is it that, in contempt of the experience of all past ages, and of all precedents, human and divine, we have ventured into a perilous path, which no eye has explored, no foot has trod; and have undertaken, after six thousand years, to manufacture a morality of our own; to decide, by a cold calculation of interest and ledger-book of profit and loss, the preference of truth to falsehood, purity to blasphemy, and humanity and justice to treachery and blood?"

It is rather hard on Paley to bear this double reproach; to be blamed, on one side, for doing nothing but innovate, and set forth a wholly new morality; and on the other, to be held up to scorn as a mere timeserver, whose one aim is to invent dishonest apologies for a morality at once corrupt and commonplace. But there is a great difference between an earnest protest against a principle which is held to be mischievous, and an attempt, by one who holds it, to divert the censure, by aspersing the motives and character of its ablest and most successful advocate in a former generation.

The appeal to history in proof of the charge against Paley is a condensation of errors. Mankind, it is said, were then ceasing to rely on use and wont, and to distrust special pleading from texts of Scripture in defence of current opinions, existing doctrines in morals, and existing immoralities. They were crying out—"Give us some philosophical basis for these things," and such a basis Paley, in his *Moral Philosophy*, undertook to supply.

Now first, the mention of mankind in such a matter is a piece of bombast, into which Paley would never have fallen. The words can only refer, at most, to a large proportion of educated Englishmen. Next, these were not accustomed at the close of last century, or indeed at any time, to accept mere use and wont as a sufficient ground for their creed in morals or religion. Still less did they believe that use and wont, or the average practice of their fellows, was a sufficient standard of moral right and wrong. Thirdly, the appeal to Scripture on moral questions, instead of having grown out of date, had latterly received a new impulse from the religious revival then in progress, of which the influence, in works like Cowper's Poems, and Wilberforce's *Practical View*, was beginning to be felt in the upper circles of society. It was probably more frequent, and more largely made, than for a century before. Fourthly, Paley repeatedly makes this very appeal. Far from intending to supersede it, he announces, as one main object, his wish to remedy a fault in most of the earlier treatises, that they "divide too much the Law of Nature from the precepts of Revelation." Lastly, so far is it from being his aim to provide a philosophical basis, by which the immoralities of his age might be justified, that a charge directly opposite is nearer the truth. Sir J. Mackintosh, we have seen, makes it his fault, that "he limited his principles too much to his own time and country," and looked on them "merely as far as they were calculated to amend prevalent vices and errors." He even begins his work with keen satire on the laws of honour, then widely prevalent. He defines them to be "rules invented by men of fashion for their mutual convenience," and says that consequently they "allow of fornication, and adultery, drunkenness, prodigality, and revenge in the

extreme, and lay no stress on the virtues opposite to these." Mr Mill himself could not state more plainly the danger of a purely subjective morality in leading to the "deification of mere opinion and habit," than Paley has done in the following words:

"Nothing is so soon made as a maxim; and it appears from the example of Aristotle that authority and convenience, education and prejudice, and general practice, have no small share in the making of them; and that the laws of custom are very apt to be mistaken for the order of nature. For which reason I suspect that a system of morality, built upon instincts, will only find out reasons and excuses for opinions and practices already established, will seldom correct and reform either."

The *Moral Philosophy* is next condemned, because of "the absence of that generous and inspiring tone" which lends their charm and usefulness to the writings of Plato, Locke, and Fenelon, and which mankind, whether they really share it or not, usually pretend to admire. The complaint itself has a partial truth. Whatever the other merits of the work, there are seen in it no sparks of moral enthusiasm, no signs of heroic and lofty aspiration. Nowhere does it reflect fully the beauty and fervour of that one brief charge of the great Apostle,—"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." The reality of this defect, however, is not the question here at issue, but its true source and explanation. Is it right or natural to use Paley for a moral scapegoat, and brand his memory and character with reproach, in order to save the credit of that

ethical theory, which he and his accuser both receive? Or is Professor Sedgwick nearer the truth, when he imputes this and similar defects to the influence of Paley's utilitarianism, and to that cause alone?

The requirement in moral writings, of a generous and inspiring tone, like that of Plato and Fenelon, is justly noted by Dr Whewell, in his Preface to Mackintosh, as one overt sign that the reviewer, then anonymous, was deserting Bentham's stand-point, and approximating in some degree to the position which Bentham treats with contempt and derision. At least the reproach has a strange sound, when levelled by a champion of utilitarian philosophy against an utilitarian divine. Mr Mill deals here with Paley like one of Pharaoh's taskmasters. He requires him to make bricks without straw. There is nothing generous in the doctrine that every virtuous act is the result of a sum in arithmetic, a counting up of so many pleasures, and a subtraction of so many pains. There is nothing ennobling in a theory, which "counts it easy to reduce to a simple calculation of gain and loss the acts of the most exalted virtue;" and, in these gains and losses, ranks the pleasant sensations of gluttony and lust and malevolence side by side with the enjoyments of benevolence, and the consolations of religious faith. The want of Platonic grandeur and dignity, and of a tone of lofty inspiration, can only be a natural result from the adoption of that Epicurean theory, which endeavours, in the words of Carlyle, by some private logic-mill and earthly mechanism of its own, to "grind out Virtue from the husks of pleasure."

There is thus a plain reason for ascribing the fault in question to the theory itself, rather than to personal defects or vices of its advocate. And this is still plainer from the examples to which the appeal is made. Two

names suggest themselves instinctively to Mr Mill as patterns of that generous and inspiring tone which befits every writer on morals; Plato, the lofty idealist, who defines goodness and virtue by likeness to the Divinity, and Fenelon, the attractive Christian mystic, who urged the duty and privilege of loving God for His excellence alone, and not with respect to the hope of reward. Bentham, the most consistent patron of utilitarianism, says that Plato and Aristotle were employed in talking and writing nonsense, and sank thus below the average of mankind. For they spoke only of duties, when men were thinking only of their interests, as it was sensible and natural for them to do. Fenelon, on his principles, must have seemed to be a mere victim of sentimental dreams.

But Mr Mill places Locke between Plato and Fenelon, a third example of that generous and inspiring tone, for the want of which Paley is to be condemned. Prof. Sedgwick, indeed, has grouped Locke and Paley together. He gives them both high praise, and says of the first that his works are noble subjects for academical study, while he finds much, not only in Paley, but in Locke, to censure and disapprove. Mr Mill adopts a very different classification. Of Paley's work he thinks meanly, while he places Locke between Plato and Fenelon, and "cannot speak of him but with the deepest reverence." He praises him for "the noble devotion to truth, the beautiful and touching earnestness and simplicity, which he not only manifests in himself, but has the power beyond almost all other philosophical writers of infusing into his reader."

So widely may impressions vary. My first reading of Locke's *Essay* was more than forty years ago. And I still remember the strong feeling of aversion and repugnance I then experienced from its opening chapters, not

from the mere absence, but the exact converse, of that generous and inspiring tone, which Mr Mill here ascribes to the whole work. The *Essay* seems to me defective alike in its principles, its method, and the greater part of its conclusions. There is neither correctness and delicacy of mental analysis, nor metaphysical depth and profoundness, nor imaginative richness and variety of thought in his contemplation of human nature, so strange and mysterious in its contrasts, and of the mind itself, with its treasures of hopes and fears, its deep emotions, and "thoughts that wander through eternity," deep as hell, and high as heaven. There are oases and green spots in his work, especially where he follows his own better instincts, and has had time to forget the principles with which he began. There is singleness and honesty of purpose, and diligence and patience of thought, so that his *Essay* is a copious treasury of the raw materials of mental philosophy. There are some fertile meadows, and low marsh land in abundance, with a few useful stepping-stones intermingled. But there are no lofty mountain-tops, clothed with eternal snow, that drink in and reflect the morning and evening sunlight, and raise our thoughts, like the best parts of Plato, to the sky, while they fill the soul with a sense of grandeur and sublimity.

With regard, then, to this requirement, in writers on ethics and philosophy, of a generous and inspiring tone of thought, Locke and Paley, as it seems to me, stand almost exactly on a level. Locke has perhaps a slight advantage, because on the subject of morals he was less consistent, and oscillates from the sensationalism of his general theory towards the view of the intuitive moralist, when he affirms that ethics are as capable, or nearly as capable, of strict demonstration as geometry itself. The

Discourse of Professor Sedgwick, which Mr Mill visits with such invective, seems to me in this respect far superior both to the work of Locke and to his own writings. In fact, the thermometer of generous and animating thought on moral subjects seems to rise or fall, exactly as the author recedes from or approaches to the position of the mere utilitarian. The prophets and apostles we place apart, they are a class to themselves above the rest. Plato and Epictetus, and A'Kempis, Fenelon and Leighton, Cudworth and More, stand among the highest; Butler and Hutcheson and Adam Smith come in a second rank; Locke and Paley and Mr Mill himself hold nearly the same level; and Bentham, the most thoroughgoing in bare and naked utilitarianism, with his one specific of a ledger-book and addition-table of pleasures, in just reward for his unmeasured contempt of nearly all his predecessors, may well form a class to himself, and occupy the lowest room.

It would not be fair, however, to Paley, to represent his work as wholly destitute of generous and inspiring passages, though it results naturally from the doctrine he shares with Mr Mill that they are comparatively few. I would appeal, first, to his remarks on West Indian Slavery:—

"But necessity is pretended; the name under which every enormity is attempted to be justified. And after all, what is the necessity? It has never been proved that the land could not be cultivated there as here by hired servants. It is said that it could not be cultivated with quite the same conveniency and cheapness, as by the labour of slaves. A pound of sugar, which the planter now sells for sixpence, could not be afforded under sixpence halfpenny;—and this is the necessity!

"The great revolution which has taken place in the Western world may probably conduce (and who knows but that it was designed?) to accelerate the fall of this abominable tyranny. And now that this conflict, and the passions which attend it, are no more, there may succeed perhaps a season for reflecting, whether a legislature, which had so long lent its support to an institution replete with human misery, was fit to be trusted with an empire the most extensive that ever obtained in any age or quarter of the world."

These are not the words of a dishonest time-server. Especially when we remember that the long agitation of Clarkson and Wilberforce had scarcely begun, and that the Court, unhappily, was in those days strongly averse to the whole movement. The suggestion that the loss of the American colonies might be a divine Nemesis for the long sanction, by the British legislature, of the slave-trade and its attendant horrors, has more resemblance to the voice of some Hebrew prophet in ancient times.

The remarks on wars of conquest deserve nearly the same praise. Nearly the whole chapter also, on "reverencing the Deity," is a pattern not only of a clear, simple, easy, and forcible style, but of a gravity and moral earnestness which appeals to the heart. The expostulation against the unbecoming nature of those attacks, to which the Christian faith had often been exposed, is a model of calmness, dignity, and effective description and reasoning, and reaches a climax of powerful eloquence at the close.

But a heavier accusation follows. We may easily forgive, in a writer, the absence of lofty aspirations and heroic virtue. But we may well think meanly of one

who is careless and indifferent about the principles from which he reasons, and is only anxious, for selfish ends, to reach by any road foregone conclusions. Such an author, both intellectually and morally, is an object of just contempt. Yet this is the charge Mr Mill has made. In adopting the doctrine of utility he admits that Paley doubtless followed the convictions of his intellect. But he has just as little doubt that, if he had started from any other, he would have contrived to reach the very same conclusions. And no wonder, since he alleges presently, that the main design of the work was "not only to maintain existing doctrines, but to save the credit of existing practices also."

The charge here seems to be, and is plainly meant to be, very damaging to Paley's character. But when we examine it more closely, and compare it with the doctrine of a later review, it will appear in a very opposite light. The alleged vice will be found, on Mr Mill's own principles, to be only the unfair and jaundiced description of a real virtue.

In the examination of Sir W. Hamilton, perhaps his ablest work, Mr Mill describes the metaphysical theories of his great rival, with much truth, as a system of imperfect junctions. And he illustrates his meaning, with much felicity, by the Cenis tunnel, if the labourers from opposite ends had worked past one another in the dark. This true, though satirical description of Sir W. Hamilton's metaphysics, applies with no less accuracy to his own ethical speculations. From Bentham's end he starts first with pure self-interest for the one law of nature, and an absolute empire of personal pain and pleasure. But his studies are too wide, and his temper too eclectic, to rest satisfied with this naked selfishness

alone. He seeks to engraft utilitarianism with Stoic and Christian elements. He starts from an opposite end with a grand intuitive axiom, the absolute and self-evident duty of world-wide, universal benevolence. The natural result is a series of imperfect junctions, or virtual contradictions, where he works past himself in the dark; and thus condemns in one review, as a proof of shameful dishonesty, what results by necessary consequence from his statements and definitions, in another review, of the only sound and safe morality.

In the review of Dr Whewell we are taught that the contrast of *à priori* and *à posteriori* reasoning, the intuitive and inductive methods, is common alike to the knowledge of truth and of duty. One line, it is said, was pursued by Descartes, Spinosa, Leibnitz and Kant, down to Schelling and Hegel; and the other by Bacon and Locke and their successors. Some have thought it possible, he continues, to be Baconians or inductive philosophers in the physical department, and to remain Cartesians, that is, intuitivists, in the moral. But it is the principal merit, in his view, of the later Germans, that they have proved this middle ground or compromise to be untenable, and "have convinced all thinkers of any force that, if they admit of an *à priori* morality, they must assign the same character to physical science."

I do not stay to examine the measure of truth or falsehood in this statement. For the present I assume it to be true, and that morals are properly, as Mr Mill clearly affirms, an inductive science. Its analogies with physics, on this view, are not with geometry and arithmetic, but with astronomy and chemistry, and the applied sciences, where experiment, observation, and induction reign supreme. The course of such induction is to rise from facts

to secondary laws, or the lower axioms of Bacon; and then, by a gradual and slow ascent, to combine these in some higher generalization. We have to reason upward, and not downward, from the circumference of a wide observation to some mysterious centre, and not from a centre first known to the circumference. To generalize, we must sometimes assume an hypothesis, and reason outward and downward. But this is only to test the hypothesis by its being found to include lower axioms already proved and known, and not to test the axioms inductively known by their agreement with the hypothesis or law which brings them together. Such, according to Mr Mill's later statement, is the primal law and necessary condition of Baconian, or inductive morality, and it is the merit of the Germans to have shown that no other is possible, unless we pretend to form a physical scheme of the universe by mere intuition.

Let us accept, then, these somewhat oracular decisions, as the voice of true, nay the only true, philosophy. But then what becomes of the severe reproach levelled against Paley in the earlier review? Transfer it to a case which, on this view, is strictly parallel, and its frivolous nature will be clear. Instead of Paley and his *Moral Philosophy*, let us substitute Sir Isaac Newton and the *Principia*, and the censure would assume this singular form. "When an astronomer starts with the one object of reaching Kepler's laws and Flamstead's observations, it is of little consequence what premises he sets out from. Vortices or attraction will equally serve him. In adopting the principle of universal gravitation, Newton, no doubt, followed the conviction of his intellect. But if he had started from any other hypothesis, we have as little doubt that he would have arrived at the very same con-

clusions. Those conclusions, that is, the received facts and laws of previous discovery, were accordant in many points with those which philosophy would have dictated. But had they been so in all points, that was not the way in which a genuine philosopher would have dealt with them."

Here, then, we have one of those imperfect junctions, or rather of those failures to effect a joining at all, with which Mr Mill's ethical statements abound. Two courses lay open before him. He might take the high level of an intuitive moralist, and lay down, like Edwards, benevolence to being in general for the defining essence of virtue. He might then make it the business of a sound moralist to dispense with all popular maxims, the embodied experience and wisdom of mankind, and proceed to test all doctrines and practices by inferences professedly reasoned out from this first principle alone. The censure on Paley would then be natural and just. His fault will be that he has not taken this high intuitive ground, or shown the contempt required from a true philosopher for the popular convictions, imperfect inductions, and supposed lessons of experience, which offered themselves ready to his hand. But then what becomes of the doctrine in the later review? Or again, he may accept induction for the true basis of moral science, so that it climbs slowly, first from facts of experience to middle axioms or moral rules; and then later to more general principles, proved by their agreement with the middle axioms, and joining them in a higher unity. The tunnelling, on this view, must begin from the end of human experience, and proceed more than half-way. The test of merit, then, in the doctrine of utility or any other, will be that, when reasoned out fairly, it meets and exactly agrees with these received moral axioms, the result of

ages of long and painful experience. But then what becomes of the severe and scornful censure of Paley? Why blame him and hold him up to contempt for doing exactly what every sensible moralist, on Mr Mill's own principles, is bound to do? If his general principle had landed him in conclusions wholly at variance with "the general conclusions of mankind from the experience of human life," this could not have disproved the secondary axioms, but the hypothesis assumed for the basis of the reasoning. Who ever dreamed of reproaching Newton on the ground, that the Laws of Kepler were already well known; and that, while he ought to have amended them by some *à priori* reasonings, all his vaunted theorems were only laborious efforts to reach foregone conclusions, and to confirm the very same laws which were known long before?

The complaint against Paley of moral laxity on special topics opens too wide a field for the close of this Lecture. So far as it is made in common by Mr Mill and Professor Sedgwick, it belongs to a later stage of the discussion. The censures in the *Discourse* are, I think, true in part, and only in part; and Mr Mill has added nothing to them but a double misrepresentation of Paley himself and of his later opponents. It is no mark of true philosophy to turn aside repeatedly from direct argument, to impute bad and corrupt motives to those whose opinions we disapprove.

The last charge is perhaps the most surprising of the whole. Paley, it seems, to maintain the credit of existing malpractices and immoralities, purposely confined his view to considerations of expediency of the most obvious and vulgar kind. To conduct the utilitarian arithmetic aright two things have to be weighed, the consequences to the outward interests of the parties concerned, and to their characters and their interests as affected by their

character. In the first there is not much room for difference of opinion. They are easily distinguished, at least for the guidance of a private individual. But an essential part of the morality or immorality of an action or rule consists in its influence on the agent's own mind, and many actions produce an effect on the character of others. In these cases there will be as much difference in the moral judgments of different persons, as in their views of human nature, and of the formation of character. Thus clear and comprehensive views of education and human culture must precede, and form the basis of, a philosophy of morals. For this much remains to be done. The materials, though abundant, are not complete. To collect them and add to them will be a labour for successive generations. But Paley brought no new light to them, and did not avail himself of the lights already thrown on it by others. He had meditated little on the subject, and had no ideas on it, but the commonest and most superficial.

The first thing worthy of note in this instructive passage is Mr Mill's entire desertion of his master, Bentham, and of the view which forms the basis of Bentham's theory. For this is not merely some doctrine of utility, but of an utility capable of easy calculation, and thereby fit to supersede the loose views and maxims current among mankind. He lays it down at the outset, as one of his chief objects, "to find the processes of a moral arithmetic, by which uniform results may be arrived at." And he tells us presently, after his list of fifteen kinds of simple pleasures, and seven causes on which their unequal value depends;—"When one has become familiar with the process, when he has acquired the justness of estimate which results from it, he can compare the sum of good and of evil with so much of promptitude, as scarcely to be

conscious of the steps of the calculation!" Yet, according to Mr Mill, what Bentham styles pleasures and pains of the third order may be the most important of the whole. And so far are they from being easy to estimate, that it will need the labours of successive generations of utilitarian philosophers, to amass the needful materials for their right estimation.

In the next place, whatever the alleged defects of Paley in this matter, it is plain in itself, and even from Mr Mill's own admission, that those of Bentham, whom he admires and extols, were greater still. He tells us that "his knowledge of human nature is bounded, wholly empirical, and the empiricism of one who had little experience and less imagination. He never knew prosperity or adversity, passion or satiety, or even sickness. He knew no dejection, no heaviness of heart. Other ages and other nations were a blank to him for purposes of instruction." And yet, while Paley is charged with commonplace and even mercenary motives, for not reaching Mr Mill's ideal of some future utilitarian, Bentham, who was plainly much below Paley in what we are here taught to view as essentials of moral philosophy, is ranked far above him as one of the seminal minds of the age.

But is Paley really so blind and ignorant on these subjects as Mr Mill affirms? On the contrary, Mr Mill, in his fancied improvements on his own master's system, is merely returning to the position which Paley had occupied before he was born. His remarks on the power of habit, and the influence of actions on character, are among the best in his work. He lays down, more tersely and pithily than Mr Mill has done, the truth he is charged with passing by in almost total neglect. He makes happiness, for instance, the basis of his whole theory, to depend

mainly on four elements. And the third of these, on which he dwells at greatest length, is the prudent constitution of the habits. It is to this passage Mackintosh gives the high praise, that perhaps no words were ever more expressive and illustrative than those which Paley has employed. He writes in another chapter, "Mankind act more from habit than reflection. Many things are to be done and abstained from for the sake of the habit alone." And he then proceeds as follows.

"There are habits, not only of drinking, swearing, lying, and some other things, which are commonly so called, but of every modification of action, speech and thought. Man is a bundle of habits."

"There are habits of industry, attention, vigilance, advertency; of a prompt obedience to the judgment, or of yielding to the first impulse of passion; of extending our views to the future, or of resting on the present; of apprehending, methodising, reasoning; of indolence and dilatoriness; of vanity, self-conceit, melancholy, partiality; of fretfulness, suspicion, captiousness, censoriousness; of pride, ambition, covetousness; of overreaching, intriguing, projecting: in a word, there is not a quality or function either of body or mind, which does not feel the influence of this great law of animated nature." "The habit of lying, when once formed, is easily extended to serve designs of malice or interest. Like all habits, it spreads indeed of itself." And again, in his remarks on Anger. "The point is to habituate ourselves to these reflections, till they rise up of their own accord when they are wanted, and with such force and colouring as both to mitigate the paroxysms of anger at the time, and at length to produce an alteration in the temper or disposition itself."

The suggestion, then, of Mr Mill, that Paley omitted

all reference to the effect of actions in fixing habits and moulding the character, in order to favour and indulge existing abuses, and flatter the ruling powers, is simply a preposterous calumny. The relative merit, on this subject, of the first and third of the great utilitarian leaders is one of degree alone. Both of them rank high above Bentham, and each has a partial advantage over the other. But when Mr Mill reproaches Paley that he had no ideas on it but "the commonest and most superficial," he provokes the natural retort that the most important by far, even of those common and familiar ideas, at once the most conspicuous on the surface of human life, and the most vital and profound in its bearing on all moral questions, is left almost wholly out of sight in his own writings. On religious questions he is so far from practising that "intrepid defiance of prejudice" which he makes the test of a true philosopher, that the most careful reader can scarcely guess the exact nature of his own convictions. The mighty influence of faith in the divine mission of Christ, and the hope of the life to come, or of reverent fear from the expectation of a righteous judgment, in deepening humility, quickening the conscience, and promoting habits of truth, uprightness, and unselfish benevolence, is overlooked and forgotten, or virtually denied. He seems to accept the task which Paley represents as so difficult to those who reject the Christian religion, "to make the best shift they can to build up a system, and lay the foundation of morality without it." And in his ethical speculations not only Christianity, but even simple Theism, is treated as a superfluous element. It is not surprising, then, however mournful, that the leading and most offensive advocate of Atheism should have boasted of late of the eminent services Mr Mill has rendered to the cause of

irreligion. He protests, it is true, against the title of godless, sometimes applied to the ethical theory he maintains. Still his answer gives no key to his own belief, and is purely hypothetical. If such a theistic doctrine is true, then his doctrine is even "more profoundly religious than any other." What he really proves is that his teaching may accidentally coexist with faith in God and Christ, and the Divine goodness. He does not prove that faith and piety, on his view, are more than personal and separable accidents, with which moral teaching, essentially, has nothing to do, and which it may leave out of sight without real loss. That fear of God, which the wisest of men pronounced the beginning of wisdom, finds no place at all in his ethical system; and the formation of religious habits of thought, and of the great lesson of Christian faith, to live

> As ever in the great Taskmaster's eye,

are views of moral culture passed by in utter silence. Such truths may be perhaps of "the most obvious and vulgar kind." Nevertheless, they are of supreme and vital importance. Paley, whatever his defects, has dwelt on them with clearness and force. Mr Mill, whatever his merits, has forgotten or denied them. And this contrast far outweighs his superiority, were it tenfold greater than it is, in discovering or suggesting recondite laws of human culture, by which utilitarian moralists are to enrich their oracles of duty in some distant and more enlightened age.

LECTURE IV.

MILL'S REVIEW OF BENTHAM.

When we turn from Mr Mill's critique on Paley's Philosophy, and Professor Sedgwick's *Discourse*, to his review of Bentham's writings, there is a marked and sudden change in the critical temperature. We have done with chilling blasts and frowning skies, and meet with smiles and sunshine once more. The Cambridge advocate of the doctrine of utility, and its able and eloquent Cambridge opponent, are treated with impartial severity. To the writer who shares his own principle Mr Mill imputes blunders, intellectual meanness, and moral dishonesty of the worst kind. To the Professor, who opposes it, he ascribes empty pretension, idle talk, and extreme ignorance. Cambridge, in his eyes, was only a nurse of superstition, and could be only a heartless stepmother to philosophy. She pipes to him with his favourite doctrine, but he will not dance. She mourns to him, rejecting and disowning it, and he is filled with zealous indignation. The youthful reviewer emulates his father's treatment, just at the same time, of Sir J. Mackintosh, and rates Professor Sedgwick as a mere schoolboy, who has meddled with a subject too high for his feeble understanding.

A very different treatment awaits the teacher at whose feet he has been reared, at a safe distance from the

stifling influence of Christian creeds and Church Articles, and to whom he looks up as his guide, philosopher, and friend. The strictures on Paley had proved how much censure and reproach he could heap on a writer, with whom, on the main question discussed, he is in substantial agreement. The remarks on Bentham show how widely he can diverge from the oracle of his childhood, and still crown him with laurel, and exalt him to a royal place in the world of thought. The refusal to share in his own high estimate, after every abatement, of Bentham's prodigious merit, is gravely styled an unpardonable error for any cultivated and instructed mind. The review has an historical importance from the later reputation its author has acquired, and from the fact that he has succeeded Bentham himself, in our days, as the best-known and most popular champion of utilitarian morality.

Some words of his preface indicate the intended place of this review in the development of his own ethical opinions and theories. Taken by itself, he says it "might give an impression of more complete adhesion to the philosophy of Locke, Bentham, and the eighteenth century, than is really the case, and of an inadequate sense of its deficiencies. But that notion will be rectified by the essays on Bentham and on Coleridge. These, again, if they stood alone, would give just as much too strong an impression of the writer's sympathy with the reaction of the nineteenth century against the eighteenth. But this exaggeration will be corrected by the more recent defence of the greatest happiness ethics against Dr Whewell."

This mental process, in which a zealous defence of utilitarianism, in name, alternates with a gradual abandonment of some of its main positions, and an approach to those of an opposite school, reaches its height in Mr Mill's later

treatise. But my present task is to analyse his praise of Bentham's writings in this earlier review.

There are two men, according to Mr Mill, to whom their country owes the greater part of the important ideas, thrown into circulation among thinking men in their time, and a revolution of their general modes of thought. There is scarcely in England an individual of importance in the world of thought, who did not first learn to think from one of them. These men are Jeremy Bentham, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the two great seminal minds of England in their own age.

Of these Bentham was in the main a Progressive, and Coleridge a Conservative philosopher. The concentric circles, which the shock given by them was spreading over the ocean of mind, were then beginning to meet and intersect. Bentham saw more clearly the truths with which existing doctrines and institutions were at variance, Coleridge the neglected truths they contained.

The first excellence of Bentham is that he awoke the questioning spirit, and broke the yoke of authority. Innumerable opinions, received on tradition as incontestable, were put on their defence, and required to give an account of themselves. He broke the spell of blind submission. If the superstition about the wisdom of ancestors has fallen into decay, and men are familiar with the idea that their laws and institutions are in great part the product of modern corruption, grafted on ancient barbarism, the ideas have been learned in his school, and the assault on ancient institutions has been carried on, for the most part with his weapons. He is the father of English innovation, the great subversive thinker of his age and country.

But this alone is not his highest title to fame. Negative philosophers are among the lowest class of the poten-

tates of mind. Such may be formed by secondary gifts out of the shallowest men, with a sufficient lack of reverence. France had Voltaire and his school of negative thinkers, and Scotland the profoundest negative thinker on record, David Hume. If Bentham had merely continued their work, he would scarcely have been heard of in philosophy. He was far inferior to Hume in Hume's qualities, and not fitted to excel as a metaphysician. He had no subtlety, or power of recondite analysis. In the former gift few great thinkers have been so deficient. But he had others, not inferior, which made him a main source of light to his own generation.

And first, he occupied the field of practical abuses. He was entrapped at Oxford, after a struggle, into signing articles he did not believe. And throughout life he never relaxed in his indignant denunciations of all laws which command such falsehoods, and all institutions, which attach rewards to them. But besides this incessant warfare with abuses, he made it a point of conscience not to assail error, till he thought he could replace it by a truth. His mind was synthetic. He laid his own foundations deeply and firmly, built up his own structure, and when he had solved the problem, or thought he had done so, pronounced all other solutions erroneous. Though we must often reject his practical conclusions, the collections of facts and observations from which they were drawn remain for ever. They are a part of the materials of philosophy. He is thus one of the masters of wisdom, the great teachers and intellectual ornaments of the human race. He is among those who have enriched mankind with imperishable gifts. To deny him this high merit may be pardonable in the vulgar, but is no longer permitted to any cultivated mind.

He was not a great philosopher. But he was a great reformer in philosophy. He introduced into morals and politics habits of thought and modes of investigation, which are essential to the idea of science, and the absence of which made them fields of interminable discussion, leading to no result. His method constituted the value of what he did;—a value beyond all price, even though we should reject the whole, as we certainly must a large part, of the opinions themselves. He has thus formed the intellect of many thinkers, who never adopted, or have abandoned, many of his opinions.

With the potent instrument of his new method, then, he has accomplished something extraordinary, though little compared with what he has left undone. It is admirably adapted for making clear thinkers, but not efficacious for making their thinking complete. It keeps before the thinker all that he knows, but does not make him know enough. He reconstructs all philosophy without reference to the opinions of his predecessors. But philosophy needs materials. Human nature and human life are wide subjects. Whoever embarks in an enterprise requiring large knowledge of them, has need of large stores of his own, and of all aids and appliances from the stores of others.

Now here, in Mr Mill's view, was Bentham's great defect. He failed in deriving light from other minds. His works have few traces of accurate knowledge of any school of thinking but his own, and many proofs of his conviction that they could teach him nothing worth knowing. He speaks of Socrates and Plato in terms distressing to his greatest admirers. "He had a phrase, expressive of the view he took of all moral speculations, not founded on a recognition of utility as the moral

standard; this phrase was 'vague generalities.' Whatever presented itself to him in such a shape, he dismissed as unworthy of notice, or dwelt upon only to denounce as absurd. The nature of his mind prevented it from occurring to him, that these generalities contained the whole unanalysed experience of the human race."

"Bentham's contempt of all other schools of thinkers, his determination to create a philosophy wholly out of the materials furnished by his own mind, and minds like his own, was his first disqualification as a philosopher. His second was the incompleteness of his own mind as a representative of universal human nature. In many of the most natural and strongest feelings of human nature he had no sympathy; from many of its graver experiences he was altogether cut off; and the faculty by which one mind understands a mind different from itself, and throws itself into its feelings, was denied him by his deficiency of imagination."

"Bentham's knowledge of human nature is wholly empirical, and the empiricism of one who has had little experience. He had neither internal experience nor external: the quiet, even tenor of his life, and his healthiness of mind, conspired to exclude him from both. He never knew prosperity and adversity, passion and satiety; he never had even the experience sickness gives; he lived from childhood to the age of eighty-five in boyish health. He knew no dejection, no heaviness of heart. He was a boy to the last... Knowing so little of human feelings, he knew still less of the influences by which those feelings are formed. No one, probably, who, in a highly instructed age, ever attempted to give a rule to all human conduct, set out with a more limited conception of the agencies by which it *is*, or of those by which it *should be* influenced."...

"Man is never recognized by him as a being capable of pursuing spiritual perfection as an end; of desiring, for its own sake, the conformity of his own character to his standard of excellence, without hope of good or fear of evil from other source than his own inward consciousness. Even in the more limited form of conscience, this great fact in human nature escapes him. Nothing is more curious than the absence of recognition in any of his writings of the existence of conscience, as distinct from philanthropy, from affection for God or man, and from self-interest in this world or the next. There is a studied abstinence from any of the phrases which, in the mouth of others, imply the acknowledgment of such a fact... Neither the word self-respect, nor the idea, occurs even once, so far as our recollection serves us, in his whole writings." (I. pp. 351—359).

But if his claims in ethics and philosophy were thus limited, in jurisprudence, Mr Mill affirms, he had a giant's task, and achieved it with the courage and strength of a hero. He dealt a death-blow to superstitious reverence for English law. He was the Hercules of that hydra, the St George of that dragon. He expelled mysticism, and set the example of viewing laws as means to certain definite and precise ends. He cleared up the confusion which attached to the idea of law in general. He showed the necessity of codification, and took a systematic view of the wants of society, for which such a code is to provide, and of the principles of human nature by which it is to be tested. Lastly, he has carried the philosophy of judicial procedure, before in a wretched state, almost to perfection.

The panegyric then concludes: "After every abatement, and it has been seen whether we have made our

abatements sparingly, there remains to him an indisputable place among the great intellectual benefactors of mankind. His writings will long remain an indispensable part of the education of the highest order of practical thinkers, and the collected edition ought to be in the hands of every one, who would understand his age, or take any beneficial part in the great business of it."

This criticism, when we remember Mr Mill's early training amidst the circle of Bentham's devoted admirers, does credit to his honesty and candour. The asperity of tone, which he admits himself in his treatment of the three Cambridge moralists, and which others have called captiousness and petulance, is here exchanged for warm, but not wholly blind, admiration. But if he avoids a moral fault, he falls into another, for a philosopher almost as great, of flagrant and irreparable self-contradiction.

The criticism seems to have a double object. Before the public it seeks to justify and continue the homage, amounting almost to idolatry, long paid to Bentham by a small circle of his admirers. But in the eyes of this inner circle it would displace him, as a very incomplete thinker, from his pedestal of unapproached eminence. And thus it makes room for his own honourable ambition, as a more complete and comprehensive thinker, to attain a still higher intellectual place than his master had achieved. He aspires to be the Aristotle of this great modern Anti-Plato. He would retain the site, and some of the foundations, of his system. But the groundplan is to be enlarged, and the upper courses pulled down, so as to admit of an entirely new structure, built on a larger scale, and with a loftier elevation. Bentham is still placed high above the herd of commonplace minds, and old-fashioned believers in the Bible, the creeds, and Christian morality. Only

his critic reserves to himself the prerogative of a still higher eminence, and a far more comprehensive range of mental vision. The claim is not ostentatiously and arrogantly made. It rather creeps in by stealth, as the result of that unconscious self-deception, from which religious reverence and humility can alone secure active and vigorous minds. But the issue is what he styles elsewhere an "imperfect junction." His traditional homage, and his true discernment of Bentham's vital defects as a thinker and reasoner, like the witnesses in the gospels, do not agree together. The truth and justice of these large and candid abatements in his view of Bentham's character cut the ground from under his feet in the high praise he still lavishes upon him, and which he seeks to impose, as a moral obligation, on the passive acceptance of his readers. He clings to a superstition of his childhood, even at the moment when he proves it, by his own frank admissions, to be a delusion and a shadow. The wide contrast in his treatment of Paley, the utilitarian advocate of revealed religion, and of Bentham, the constant railer against lawyers, creeds, and churches, serves to illustrate Bentham's own principle of sympathy and antipathy in a very conspicuous way.

Are these high eulogies really deserved? I believe them to be, in the main, as groundless as I have shown the reproaches levelled against Paley to be. Whatever blame attaches to the divine belongs to the jurist in equal or even greater measure. The improvements he is said to have caused are more than balanced by great and spreading evils, which his works have fomented and increased, till they are becoming hourly more perilous to the safety and peace of nations. In the cause of genuine morality, I hold it a duty to expose the fallacy of these

high pretensions, set up on his behalf, which can only be sustained by sacrificing the far higher claims of truth, conscience, and religious faith.

The first merit Mr Mill ascribes to him is that he ranks with Coleridge as one of the two great seminal minds of the age. Such estimates of the relative influence of different writers are often most deceptive. They depend on the circles in which the critic has moved. The effect of Bentham's writings among legists, and in technical subjects of law, may have been very great. That is a point for lawyers to decide. But in the wide sphere of intellectual thought, including physical science, poetry, philosophy, morals, and religion, there must be at least a hundred thinkers of his own time, who are justly to be ranked above him. I have met with numbers of thoughtful minds, who have owned to a powerful influence from Cowper, or Scott, or Wordsworth, from Coleridge or Carlyle, from Stewart or Brown or Hamilton, from Whately, Arnold, or Isaac Taylor, from Robert Hall, Vinet or Chalmers. But I do not remember, in the course of forty years, to have met with any one who professed himself indebted to Bentham for a single important idea.

But even had his relative influence been far wider than I believe it to have been, a more vital question remains. The merit of a seminal mind depends wholly on the nature of the seeds which it has sown. "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles." Yet there can be no doubt that thistledown is more diffusive, and has a more prolific virtue, than the fig-tree or the vine.

The main scope of Bentham's writings, passing by religious truth of all kinds with hardly disguised contempt, is to replace "old-fashioned ethics" by a new moral arithmetic of his own. And this is based on the

attempted summation of certain classified pains and pleasures. One main object of Coleridge was to disprove and set aside this merely prudential morality of consequences, and to show the vital connection of true morality and right reason with the high and solemn messages and doctrines of the Christian faith. Now if the fruit from one of these seminal minds is worthy of praise, and answers at all to the corn, wine, and oil of the good land of promise, the effect of the other must have been, in the world of morals, to fulfil the curse of the patriarch, to make "thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley." Some apparent improvement in the secondary defects of law, and the pruning away of some withered leaves of ancient forms, will be a poor compensation, if the very principle of reverence for law and authority is uprooted and overthrown. The probable result of such a change, when "subversive thinking" has scattered its seeds throughout all classes of society, must be what a prophet describes, when a nation "sows the wind, and reaps the whirlwind."

The next ground of eulogy is peculiar and rather startling. Bentham was "the great subversive thinker of his age." This, in Mr Mill's judgment, is one, though not quite the highest, "of his titles to fame." The reason for this dictum is hardly less strange. "Mankind are deeply indebted to negative or destructive philosophers, nor will there ever be a lack of work for them, in a world where so many false things are believed, so many which have been true are believed long after they have ceased to be true."

What can these meteoric truths be, true yesterday, and false to-day or to-morrow? This is not explained. They seem to be visions of the same abnormal philosophy,

which has led Mr Mill to suspect that two and two may perhaps make five in some unknown and distant world. But the main assertion is clear. The world owes a deep debt to those who undertake to pull down falsehoods, and expose absurdities, even without having any knowledge of the truths to replace them. Now this is itself a moral absurdity and falsehood of the plainest kind. What can such men do, but replace one falsehood by another, only redoubling the confusion? They may do still worse. Under the nickname of falsehoods and absurdities they may assail truths too high, too deep, or too wide, to be learned or received by rash and frivolous minds. On Bentham's own principles, this pulling down of actual usages and opinions, when there is nothing certainly better to replace them, must cause pain to the many, pleasure only to a few. It can thus have only a negative value. The only ground for praising such efforts is when something nobler and better replaces what is overthrown. The work of a moral scavenger may be useful, though scarcely honourable. But scavengers, who are blind also, can be nothing more than a dangerous nuisance.

The next topic of praise is of a higher kind. Alone among thousands, he had the moral sensibility and self-reliance to oppose the profitable frauds of the law, and the immorality of church creeds and tests. The former subject I leave to the lawyers, and shall confine myself to the second and more important.

The claim, which is set up for Bentham under this head, is a strange instance of distorted moral reasoning. He was sent to Oxford when only fifteen, was required on admission to declare his assent to the Thirty-Nine Articles; and, when he felt scruples, was told that it was not for boys like him to set up their judgment against the

great men of the church. He signed after a struggle, but the impression never left him that he had done an immoral act. And he never relaxed, we are told, in denouncing laws which command such falsehoods, and institutions which attach rewards to them.

I have no doubt that the imposition of the test, as was done so long at Oxford only, on all young students first entering college, was a folly almost amounting to a public crime. It would have been wrong and foolish, even if nine-tenths of the freshmen could be expected to have gone first through a course of theological study, and to have satisfied themselves of the truth of every sentence. In the actual state of the church and country, it could only generate the immoral custom of subscribing sacred words without believing them, or in some nonnatural sense. Its direct tendency must thus have been to lower and destroy the instinct of truthfulness in the rising generation.

So far, I think, Bentham was right, and the practice he censured to be greatly deplored. But it is a strange error to set up a claim of high moral sensibility, because he first signed articles of faith without believing them, and then railed at the university, through a long life, for having exposed him to the temptation. It is no less foolish to say that the law commanded the falsehood, and attached a reward to it. Thousands of honest and upright Nonconformists, in the two last centuries, have forborne to seek the benefits of Oxford residence, or others of the same kind, because of the tests imposed, and never thought of claiming for themselves any heroic virtue. Bentham merely yielded to a temptation, which many others more honest have resisted and overcome, though a still larger number may have yielded to it, and never

felt so deep a regret for what they had done. To cast the whole blame on an unwise law, when it attaches conditions too rigid, or otherwise unsuitable, to the fulfilment of a trust, or the enjoyment of a privilege, and to give a martyr's praise to the deceiver, who pretends to satisfy a condition he has not fulfilled, turns upside down the plainest lessons of morality. Real remorse, in such a case, will be disposed to modest silence. The outcries of Bentham, for fifty years afterward, against both universities, and all religious tests, are no proof of delicate moral sensibility, but of wounded pride alone.

We reach at length more solid ground, if the praise can be sustained. Unlike the mere negative thinkers, Bentham, it is said, undertook to build up as well as pull down. It was when he had solved a problem, or thought he had done so, that he declared all other solutions erroneous. Hence what they produced will not last, and must perish with the errors it has exploded; but what he did has its own value, and will outlast all errors to which it is opposed.

Here Mr Mill can hardly disguise the perplexity which results from a false position. He attempts to reveal a strong contrast, where, by his own admissions, no real contrast can be found. There can be no merit in rasing to the ground, or burning to ashes, all the buildings of a metropolis, though the streets may be irregular, and some houses unsightly, and its worst courts and alleys nests of vice, if the only result is to rear a few Indian wigwams amidst the smoking ruins. The only real excuse for Bentham's crusade against all things established, and his contempt for previous writers, current creeds, and actual laws or systems of morals, would be his ability to surpass them, and rear something more noble, august, and ex-

cellent, on the sites he had cleared. But how could this be done by a writer, of whom his warm admirer has to make all these strange admissions? What does he tell us of this Bacon of jurisprudence, this Newton of social science? That his knowledge of human nature was singularly bounded and empirical. That his empiricism, further, was that of a most limited experience. Other ages and nations were a blank to him for the purposes of instruction. He was devoid of imaginative power. He never once recognized even the existence of conscience, as distinct from affection and self-love. He never recognized the nature of man, as a being capable of pursuing spiritual perfection as an end. In other words, the fundamental conception of true ethical science was strangely and wholly absent. These admissions Mr Mill proceeds at once to make. How, then, can the attempt of a writer, thus disqualified, to set aside all previous philosophies, creeds, and institutions, and regenerate society by a new-devised moral arithmetic of his own, raise him to a higher level than such negative thinkers as Hume and Voltaire? Must it not rather aggravate their fault by a self-conceit and rashness so extreme, that it almost ceases to be ridiculous, and by its very audacity borders closely on the sublime?

But at least, it is said, he was a great reformer in philosophy. He brought into it a new method it greatly needed, and for want of which it was at a standstill, with habits of thought and modes of investigation, essential to the idea of science. The method has a value beyond all price, even should we reject the whole, as we certainly must a large part, of the conclusions themselves. It consists in detail, in treating wholes by separating them into their parts, abstractions by resolving them into things,

and breaking every question into pieces, before attempting to solve it. In the rigidity with which Bentham adhered to this plan there was the greatest originality. Hence his interminable classifications, and elaborate demonstrations of the most acknowledged truths.

A new method, first discovered a few years ago by a person of very narrow experience, for solving the hardest problems of reason, faith, conscience, social and political duty, which the greatest minds have studied and written upon for thousands of years, bears on its face the strongest suspicion of quackery and imposture. This is only confirmed by the features just named, by these classifications, involving, as Mr Leckie observes, no real subtlety of thought, and new demonstrations of old and familiar truths. Mr Mill has said just before that his distinctive character, in contrast with mere negative thinkers, is to be synthetic. But now his chief excellence is his analytic method. He solves great questions, not like knots, by patiently untying their complications, nor like planets and stars, by using a mental telescope of high power and achromatic clearness, but like the stones used for mending roads, by breaking them in pieces. Surely this is a strange improvement on earlier methods for solving social problems, and exploring the mysteries of human life and the human heart.

In this praise of the new method Mr Mill forgets his own philosophy. For with him things themselves are only bundles of sensations, or possibilities of sensation, in some way tied up together. So that Bentham's specific, as he describes it, once fully carried out, would leave us neither things, laws, persons, principles, nor habits, nor any possible basis for definite reasoning and fixed conclusions, but numbered and ticketed sensations alone. Dis-

section may have its uses, no doubt, not only in schools of anatomy, but in the fields of scientific thought. But to count up details, and neglect the principles on which they depend, and rely for the laws of social life on dissection and partition only, can never lead to genuine science. We might reckon up, with a wearisome arithmetic, all the atoms of which the sun, planets, satellites and streams of meteors are composed. But who could approach, in this way, to a true and comprehensive conception of the solar system? Who can understand the marvellous structure of the human body, by weighing the oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen and carbon which remain, when that structure is destroyed, and the corpse is given to the flames?

Mr Mill's own admissions thus disprove the praise of Bentham's method. They make it hard to understand how he can be serious in this extravagant eulogy. First, he owns that his materials were unusually limited and defective. Next, he maintains that pleasures differ in quality and kind, as well as in quantity. The new arithmetic, then, consists in the attempted summation of incommensurables, like adding surfaces to solids, or weights to values. Lastly, he admits that the greater part of the results are erroneous. This new method, then, in morals and politics, which turns the deepest problems of human life and duty into tables, like those of logarithms, calculated beforehand, of the total amount of happiness ground out from twenty different kinds of pleasure, and in which most of the calculations give wrong results, can be nothing else than a grotesque parody of genuine science.

The next topic of praise is Bentham's warfare against mere phrases used in the place of arguments. If they appealed to no external standard, and implied no fact, he treated them as mere devices to impose opinions on

others, without the trouble of giving any reason. Mr Mill quotes the passage Ch. III. sec. 1, with approval, where the censure is applied successively to all the terms, the moral sense, common sense, right understanding, eternal and immutable morality, the truth of things, the fitness of things, the law of nature, right reason, natural justice, and Divine illumination. He thinks that Bentham has the high merit of being the first to point out that these phrases contain no argument.

The subject recurs in a later review. Dr Whewell had styled the same passage extravagant ridicule, a wild method of dealing with adverse moralists, and yet accepted with humble admiration by some of Bentham's followers. Mr Mill rebukes his presumption, and defends it once more. Bentham did not mean that people really asserted the follies he ascribes to them, but that they really held them without knowing it, and that the phrases passed muster in this way. Let us examine what this repeated apology is really worth.

In every subject we must arrive, sooner or later, at some first principles or fundamental ideas, beyond which we cannot go. But we may perhaps walk around them, view them in different lights, translate them into different dialects, each suggesting its own analogies and resemblances, and thus obtain a fuller and clearer view of their real character. We pass here from the region of argument and deduction to that of intuition. But this intuition only grows clear, when the eye of the mind is steadily fixed upon it, traces its likeness or unlikeness to other truths, or acts of the understanding, and embodies these perceptions or discoveries in some answering phrase.

The doctrine of utility must submit to this common law of all human thought, no less than those which

Bentham ridicules and condemns. Why should we aim at some distant pleasure, instead of following the impulse of the present moment? Why should we regard the pleasure of others, as well as our own? Why sacrifice our pleasure to theirs? Why calculate a maximum, and adopt the result, instead of obeying the simpler call of selfish instinct, or unselfish and generous love? How can we rise beyond a mere guess that what pleased us yesterday will please to-morrow, or that sequences in past years will determine sequences of actions wholly distinct, in years to come? The doctrine of utility, when it strives to elude all reference to ultimate ideas, brings in a dozen questions of this kind. And it can never solve them, or appear to solve them, without some assumption or other of the same kind with those which Bentham condemns.

The good sense of Paley here forms a bright contrast to Bentham's extravagant ridicule, and to the superficial defence of that ridicule, and attempt to convert it into a claim of especial merit, on which Mr Mill has ventured. He writes as follows:

"Why am I obliged to keep my word? Because it is right, says one. Because it is agreeable to the fitness of things, says another. Because it is agreeable to reason and nature, says a third. Because it is conformable to truth, says a fourth. Because it promotes the public good, says a fifth. Because it is required by the will of God, concludes a sixth. Upon which different accounts it is observable. First, that they all ultimately coincide. The fitness of things means their fitness to produce happiness. The nature of things means that actual constitution of the world, by which such and such actions produce happiness, and others misery. Reason is the principle by which we discover or judge of this constitution. Truth is this

judgment, drawn out into propositions. So that what promotes public happiness, or happiness on the whole, is necessarily agreeable to the fitness of things, to nature, reason, and truth; and such is the Divine character that what promotes the general happiness is required by the will of God; and what has all the above properties must needs be right. For right means no more than conformity to the rule we go by, whatever that rule may be. This is the reason that moralists, from whatever different principles they set out, commonly meet in their conclusions. That is, they enjoin the same conduct, prescribe the same rules of duty, and with a few exceptions deliver in dubious cases the same determinations."

These words of Paley throw light on the mistake into which Bentham and Mill have both fallen, and which the former has made doubly repulsive by ridiculing deeper thinkers and better moralists than himself. They have confounded various presentations of the primal idea, essential to all moral science, with a deductive proof of its existence and reality, or the means for applying it, in detail, to the guidance of human life.

The alleged merit, then, of Bentham is really a grave defect, shared by his apologist. But the claim proceeds further. The application of a true inductive philosophy to the problems of ethics was unknown, it is said, to the Epicureans as well as all others. This is Bentham's own prerogative. He has finally installed it in philosophy, and made it henceforth imperative upon writers of every school. And this is nothing less than a revolution in philosophy.

A very wide question is here started, and renewed both in the later review and treatise, the place of induction, deduction, and intuition in moral science. I shall hope to discuss it more fully in a separate lecture. For

the present I make only one or two brief remarks. Mr Mill errs equally, I think, in his use of the term, and in his assertions that the title belongs to Bentham's method, of its general adoption, and its superlative value. The method may be piecemeal and fragmentary, but is deductive, not inductive. By his own admission, this deduction is attempted with materials most defective in amount, and in their very nature, from differences in kind, unmanageable for such a process of calculation. It could thus lead to right conclusions only by a happy chance. In Bentham's hands, by Mr Mill's own account, the chances have proved unfavourable, and we have no proof that it has been more successful in his own. In Ch. XVII. of Professor Grote's Examination there is an able and convincing refutation of this claim, which Mr Mill here makes on his master's behalf, of a Baconian revolution in moral science. He writes as follows:

"The moralists of last century, who spoke variously of a moral sense, or a faculty which they supposed might be made matter of psychological observation, all supposed that they were following Bacon and Locke, and setting Moral Philosophy on an inductive basis, on principles, namely, of observation, experience, *a posteriori* reason. In fact if, setting aside the truth of one or the other system, and comparing only the methods, we consider which falls in most with the idea of going only by experience, I think the advantage lies with the emotional system. No fact of experience can be more clear than that man, whenever he has feelings at all, has feelings of kindness, of fairness, of generosity, of moral approval of some things and condemnation of others, and that these different sorts of feelings are in substance the same for all men, at least to the same extent that happiness is the same for all men.

Against this fact of experience utilitarianism sets the consideration, true perhaps, but possessing something of an *a priori* character, that people may feel wrongly; and that, whatever their feelings may be, it is quite certain that no action can be good, but such as is promotive of some happiness. By what process of thought a morality, which consists in the first instance of the assumption of a principle like this and then of a course of deduction from it, can be considered a morality of experience, as against a morality resting immediately on the experience of human feeling, is what I cannot understand."

"As regards the extent to which the one and the other of these kinds of philosophy makes morality matter of observation, and in this respect likely to grow and improve, the former does so in reality much more than the latter. Human feeling of pleasure and pain, what constitutes human happiness, is matter of observation to both: but in addition to this, human feeling of liking and repugnance, what it is that stirs sympathy, also an undoubted fact of human nature, is matter of observation to the former...so untrue is it that utilitarianism, as distinguished from other systems of morality, is the morality of observation and experience. The reverse is the fact. Utilitarianism confines or excludes observation, giving us assumption instead." (pp. 263—266.)

Another merit ascribed to Bentham is his process of exhaustion. "By rejecting all which is not the thing, he works out a definition of what it is." The method, indeed, is as old as philosophy itself. Plato owes everything to it and does everything by it. Bentham was probably not aware that Plato had anticipated him in the process, to which he too declared that he owed everything. "His speculations are thus eminently systematic

and consistent. He has impressed an admirable quality on minds trained in his habits of thought, that they digest new truths as fast as they receive them."

A method, which has slumbered for twenty-four centuries, from Plato to Bentham, and led the first to conclusions which the second calls mere nonsense and folly, and the second to others which his own disciple and admirer calls mainly erroneous, can claim a very limited and dependent excellence at most. Its virtue must depend wholly on the way in which it is used. In Plato's hands it was often highly effective, and the handmaid to thoughts and truths of the noblest kind. But in Bentham, from his unusual want of power to apprehend such truths, it leads only to a kind of moral sand-waste, a mapping out into rectangles and squares of a wide and dreary expanse of marshes and lagoons of thought. Mr Mill seems to forget how much easier it is to arrange in sets lifeless counters, than to arrange and classify, and describe aright, the muscles, nerves, and vertebræ of the human body. Those great defects in Bentham's system, of which he complains, make a process of exhaustion and dissection, of course, far simpler. But they render it also comparatively worthless.

The systematic nature of Bentham's writings has doubtless had much to do with his influence as a leader of thought. Writers, in whom this is absent, usually gain no more than a fitful and transient power over the minds of others. But its real worth must depend on two conditions, the comprehensive materials of the system, and the soundness and truth of the first principles on which it is based. The great defect in Bentham's materials Mr Mill has fully acknowledged. The fault in his principles is equally real, and still more vital, however Mr Mill may

strive to disguise an evil in which he shares largely. This method, then, either in the hands of the master or his disciples, can give them no real claim to high places in moral and political philosophy. A child may learn easily to count the fingers or the toes, and to distinguish the eyes, ears, nose, and mouth from each other. But he does not thereby rise into the character of a learned physician or skilful anatomist, well versed in the secret powers, the mysterious faculties, and marvellous symmetries of man's bodily frame.

The last claim set up for Bentham, and the truest, is that he is an eminent jurist, and a great reformer of English law. In other respects Mr Mill has abated largely from the homage paid to him by his warm and zealous admirers. As moralist, philosopher, and metaphysician, he deposes him to a secondary place. He seems to feel it, then, like a debt of honour, to extol highly his merits as a reformer even in philosophy, but chiefly in law, his peculiar province. And here indeed there is something like a consent of high authorities. Not only Mill and Austin, who share his ethical standpoint, but Mackintosh, Whewell, and Blackie, who renounce and disown it, offer a common tribute to his labours as a jurist. Dr Whewell writes of him as follows:

"He laboured assiduously to reduce jurisprudence to a system. Such an attempt, if carried through with any degree of consistency, could hardly fail to lead to valuable results. In a body of knowledge so wide and various, all system-making must bring into view real connections and relations of parts; and even if the basis be wrong, those connections will admit of being translated into the terms of a truer philosophy. Truth emerges from error sooner than from confusion. But his principle is really applica-

ble to a great extent in legislation, and covers almost the whole of the field with which the legislature is concerned. In his mode of performing the task there are great merits and great drawbacks. The merits are system, followed out with great acuteness, illustrated with great liveliness, and expressed in a neat, precise, and luminous style."

Sir J. Mackintosh and Professor Blackie, both opposed to Bentham's ethical principles, praise him in his efforts as a law reformer even in still higher terms. And Mr Mill, as if to compensate for abandoning his defence as a philosopher, rises here into a poetical fervour, unlike his usual style. He has dealt a deathblow to reverence for English law, which instead of the perfection was the shame of human reason. He has been the Hercules of this hydra, the St George of this dragon. He has opened its traps and pitfalls, where the teeth of hyenas, of foxes, and all cunning animals, were left imprinted on the curious remains of antediluvian caves. The honour of the victory is all his own. He found its philosophy a chaos, and he left it a science. He found its practice an Augean stable, and turned through it a river which is fast sweeping away all its rubbish. He has thus become the first seminal mind of his age, and one of the great intellectual benefactors of mankind, one of the great teachers and masters of wisdom; and has enriched the human race with imperishable gifts, which approach to, though they may not, as some still more zealous admirers have thought, equal or even transcend "all Greek, all Roman fame."

It may seem rash and invidious to dispute the justice of these encomiums, and not to rest satisfied with the kind of compromise between deep dislike and blind idolatry, which Mr Mill has proposed, and striven to impose as a moral obligation on all educated men. I can

pretend to no wide acquaintance with English law, or perusal of the whole series of Bentham's works. One grand fault, also, of his moral system, its pure externalism, does not apply, or very slightly, to his legal labours, since human laws are external in their very nature, being formed and executed by those who cannot read the heart. It is thus quite possible and natural that Bentham should have greater merit, and approach nearer to the truth, in questions of jurisprudence than in ethical science. Still the union of the two subjects is so intimate and vital, that these lofty encomiums on his exploits, even in this field, can hardly be received without betraying the cause of sound morality and of Christian truth. This, at least, is my own deep and settled conviction. A writer, who does not even recognize, as Mr Mill admits, the existence of conscience, whose allusions to religious faith and doctrine are chiefly marked by contemptuous indifference, and in whose works there is hardly a trace of any high instinct or lofty aspiration, can never be enthroned as the Solon of present and future legislation without disastrous results to the moral welfare and true happiness of mankind.

And first, these high claims and pregnant admissions can only be reconciled by setting aside Bentham's own authority. He professed to base all his legal reforms on his improved ethics, and rejects the idea with scorn, that he might rank low as a moralist, and still as a legist be extolled to the skies. "Those," he says, "who are willing to distinguish between politics and morals, to assign utility as the foundation of the one, and justice of the other, announce nothing but confused ideas. The only difference is that one directs the operations of government, the other the actions of individuals. But their

object is common; it is happiness. That which is politically bad cannot be morally good, unless we suppose that the rules of arithmetic, true for large numbers, are false for small ones."

Such, then, in Bentham's own judgment, is the relation between his moral dicta and his conclusions in the field of legal reform. Both are cases of arithmetic, one applied to individuals, the other to large numbers of men. In the simpler case, according to Mr Mill, the arithmetic is faulty, and the results "for the most part" erroneous, because the materials used were far too limited, and the faculty for using a wider experience was almost wholly absent. With this failure in the simpler problem, which applies to one person only, we are to believe in prodigious and unexampled success, when the like arithmetic is used to determine the laws, the institutions, the happiness, and future destiny, of whole nations. Such a contrast in the double result is incredible, however Mr Mill may impose its acceptance, as a clear moral duty, on every cultivated mind.

But let us compare this high claim and these candid admissions in themselves, and see how they can agree. Here, first, we have a school of thought, which nowhere recognizes the existence of conscience, or regards self-culture as a duty, or men as capable of aiming at moral perfection; which treats existing dogmas in religion with habitual neglect, and religion itself as a variable product of opinion, a supplement to law, and an aid to police; which is so modest, that it charges Socrates and Plato with talking only nonsense, and so self-satisfied that it despises, as vague generalities, "the whole unanalyzed experience of the human race." I may add to Mr Mill's own description, with equal truth, so cold and heartless,

that it never offers a glimpse of lofty and heroic inspiration; so earthly, that it leaves wholly out of sight the precepts and promises of the gospel, man's immortality, the doctrine of a coming judgment, and the hopes of the life to come. How can such a school of thought produce a sound philosophy, able to reform and recast, and mould anew into higher and more perfect shape, the laws and customs of a Christian people? No stream can rise above its fountain. No theory of jurisprudence, based on the doctrine that man's highest aim in life is to work out certain sums in arithmetic, very hard to work aright, on totals of attainable pleasure, and which further ranks the pleasures of adultery and malevolence side by side with those of heroic virtue or seraphic devotion, can fail, whether applied to individuals or nations, to prove itself a most deceptive and dangerous guide.

No doubt, as a great "subversive thinker," to adopt Mr Mill's own phrase, Bentham may have rendered effective service to the cause of legal improvement. So dynamite has been found very useful for blasting hard rocks, that would resist feebler agents, and has turned them into materials with which human skill may construct afterward some noble breakwater, where a thousand ships find refuge and shelter in the storm. But no building, whether pier or breakwater, private home or stately palace, can be reared by such explosive mixtures alone. And nothing firm or lasting, nothing noble or generous, no scheme of laws and institutions worthy a great nation like our own, can possibly be reared on the basis of such principles as Bentham has laid down in his works. The structures he would substitute for those he maligns and strives to destroy have no pledge for their stability. They are built, not on the rock, but on the quagmire. They

have no roots in the deepest, truest, and noblest instincts of the human heart. They resemble rather those card castles, inscribed with ingenious pictures or geometrical diagrams, which children set up for their own amusement. One touch of military violence, one breath of popular caprice, will prove enough for their overthrow.

Let us compare the two sides of the account, even as Mr Mill has placed them before us, with a few helps from Bentham's works. The legal abuse which first awoke his indignation, we may assume, has disappeared, and three attendances in Chancery are no longer charged, when only one is given. Codification has been proved, in theory, to be attainable, and commissions have sat upon it, though it is still far from being attained. Some branches of law have been simplified, though new ones have arisen out of later wants and inventions, and leave the total, perhaps, as complex as before. The method of procedure, in books, has been brought near to perfection; while still in practice a civil suit, and a criminal, have proved more interminable than was ever known before. Various teethmarks of foxes and hyenas in the ancient caves of British legislation may perhaps have been effaced and done away.

Such are the gains alleged. What are the losses or dangers? The great body of the people, for whose restraint or guidance English laws are designed, have been diligently and zealously trained in such lessons as these. First, that the laws under which their fathers lived and died, and their country grew into honour and greatness, are a hydra, of which the heads need to be cut off; a dragon, which the new patron saint of utilitarianism has had to conquer and slay; a heap of ordure, through which subversive thinkers have done well to turn a river, that is

fast sweeping it away. Next, that their rulers have suffered the nation to be preyed upon by swarms of useless placemen, and this not from negligence and imbecility alone, but from a settled plan of oppressing and plundering the people; and that no thanks are due to the laws, if they have escaped from being the victims of every heartless oppressor. They have been further trained in the new theory of government, that its main object should be to make the numerical majority supreme, to give "the greatest number" absolute power, and then to keep this power in their hands, whoever the nominal rulers, their humble and passive delegates, may be. They have been taught, by the example of the new Solon, to be sternly and fiercely abusive of the imagined faults of their superiors, and blind and insensible to their own. They learn, from his parting voice, to regard as idle talkers of nonsense all who venture to speak to them of their duties, and to account it a proof of their own good sense to care for their interests alone. They have been told, further, that the difference between the purest religious faith and the foulest superstition is verbal only; that religion has not been powerful enough to do good, but that its power of doing evil has always been great; and that it is religion which made Philip the Second, Mary of England, and Charles of France, the scourge, the tyrant, and the butcher, of the countries over which they ruled.

Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? When this question of the Great Teacher of true wisdom receives an affirmative answer, then may a subversive thinker, whose teaching I have just described from his own writings, claim justly a high place among the masters of wisdom, the intellectual lights and guides of the human race. Such lights are no stars in God's firmament.

They can only be passing meteors, that "lead to bewilder, and dazzle to blind." They may draw out their catalogues of springs of action. But in these the true mainsprings of all right Christian action, the fear of God and the love of Christ, will find no place. They may invent panopticons for state prisoners. But they will have helped to banish from the thoughts and policy of nations the true Panopticon, daily faith in the Supreme Judge, and the presence of His allseeing eye. They may mend the details of human laws, may square the trunk by rule and compass, cut off useless twigs or decayed branches, and thus give an air of greater symmetry to the whole. But their pains will be worse than useless, if through their teaching the life has perished, and the spirit of loyalty, and all habits of respect for law and authority, have wholly passed away.

The writings of Bentham have had wider acceptance among the so-called men of progress in France and on the continent than in his own country. And those who look below the surface, and have not cultivated themselves into contempt alike for Christianity and the nobler forms of heathen philosophy, may see there plain signs of the tendency and issue of such instruction, when widely received. What are the moral features conspicuous in France and Spain at this hour, and which threaten to invade our own shores, and disturb society from its foundations? Laws despised, authority enfeebled, liberty degenerating into violent self-will; uneasy, feverish oscillation, from irreligion to blind superstition, and back to irreligion and mockery again; a social state where nothing is fixed or stable, and new constitutions grow up, like mushrooms, in a night, and perish almost as soon as they are born. If fixed principles cease to be found in states-

men, or habitual probity in merchants, or purity and peace in the hearths of domestic life, and multitudes sport on in the eager pursuit of idle amusements or sensual pleasures, while the earth still rocks and trembles under their feet, to what shall we ascribe these threatening symptoms of political confusion and moral decay? May we not trace them, at least in part, to the influence of a teacher, who claims to regenerate society by a new moral arithmetic; but who never owns the reality of conscience, alludes to religious faith only with open contempt or secret disparagement, indulges in violent abuse of the ministers of law and the teachers of religion, and still is held up by Mr Mill to admiration and reverence, as one of the greatest ornaments and benefactors of mankind?

So long, I believe, as such principles are widely current, and their advocates held in especial honour as leaders and guides of public thought, a dark and troubled future must be in store for the nations where they prevail. The foundations will have been destroyed. The floodgates of selfishness and passion, of popular self-will and impatience, will have been opened wide, and the torrent sweep over the land. The fixed institutions of social life, and the guiding lights of Christian faith and piety, will be veiled and disappear. Unless the evil be arrested and reversed by the spread of a truer, deeper, and loftier morality, based on the authority of conscience, God's deputy in the heart, and the voices of revealed and eternal truth, the results must be deplorable. Soon or late the stars in their silent courses will fight against guilty nations, where conscience is denied, God is forgotten, pleasure alone is worshipped, and the maxim of the old sensualists is enthroned supreme in the hearts of men, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

LECTURE V.

BENTHAM AND THE ASCETIC PRINCIPLE.

THREE elements enter into the complete conception of Moral Science. The first is a law or ideal standard of right and wrong, which goes before and prepares the way for all right and worthy action. The second is that constitution and moral capacity of the agent, whereby the ideal is more or less distinctly perceived, and awakens moral emotions, the subjects of personal and inward experience. The third consists in the results or later consequences of right or wrong action. The systems in which these are respectively prominent are the objective or ideal, the subjective or emotional, and the utilitarian, apobatic, or external. The only just and complete view is one into which all these elements enter, but each in its due order. Whenever isolated, they must tend to produce three varieties of error, the idols of the clouds, the marketplace, or the cave.

The first and highest aspect of morals is that which contemplates an ideal standard of humanity, an image of the Divine perfection, conceived as prior to the actual conditions of human life, and including laws of goodness and righteousness, settled for ever in heaven. But these will take a special form from those facts of experience, which are reechoed and confirmed by the witness of Divine revelation. The doctrine of the fall, transferred

from theology to practical life, reveals itself in the conflict between the flesh and the spirit. It teaches that man has a lower and a higher nature, a worse and a truer self, instincts of mere animal pleasure, and a higher and nobler law of conscience, which strive for the mastery; and that he is prone by nature to follow the downward rather than the upward path. Experience proves the fatal proneness of mankind to embrute the soul, and quench the light of conscience, and neglect all high aspirations after moral excellence, and the spiritual perfection of their being.

The moral ideal, then, in man's actual state, involves a doctrine and law of ceaseless conflict. It enjoins on him a constant effort that the flesh, the lower and corrupt nature, may be subdued to the spirit. It bids him cultivate, at whatever cost of present sacrifice, those instincts, habits, and desires, which constitute inward holiness, and whereby his merely animal life may be raised and transformed into one spiritual, heavenly, and Divine.

Such is the definition of Christian Asceticism in its best and purest form. It finds its basis in that saying of the Apostle, the only place where the root occurs in the New Testament,—"Herein do I exercise myself, to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men." And it has its further illustration in the spiritual gymnastics he imposed on himself, and recommended to his son in the faith;—"I so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air, but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." "Exercise thyself unto godliness; for bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable for all things." The lesson it enforces has deep roots in the conscience, and has always appealed to the best and highest instincts of the noblest

natures, and been the fruitful parent of heroic deeds. But in proportion to its truth and excellence is the risk of great perversion and abuse, when some form of pride or gloomy superstition replaces genuine wisdom and Christian love as the secret mainspring of outward acts of self-denial. The pattern of the true ascetic is the great Apostle, from whose words to Felix the name is borrowed, and who dedicated all his powers, with noble self-sacrifice, to the glory of God and the highest welfare of mankind. The false ascetic has his type in the Indian fakir, or a Simeon Stylites, condemning himself on his pillar to filth and solitude, in order to gain the admiration of the vulgar, or to purchase for himself freedom from Divine anger, and a stock of fancied merit in the sight of heaven.

It seems a true instinct, then, which has led Bentham to place the ascetic principle first in order in a threefold distinction of moral systems, since it embodies really the special form of ideal morality suited to a fallen world; and to place next to it, under the name of "a principle of sympathy and antipathy," the subjective, internal, or emotional aspect of ethics; while the third and last is the apobatic or utilitarian, which traces the moral nature of actions in their outward effects and consequences alone. Since, however, his object is not to reconcile these three views, and assign their nature and limits, but to explode the first and second, and enthrone the third in exclusive supremacy, the natural effect follows from this delusion of a narrow mind. He replaces the true description of ascetic and subjective morals by a ridiculous travesty. He deals with the moral teachers he dislikes as the Inquisition dealt often with its victims, and clothes them with a suit of motley, to make them ridiculous, before consigning them to the flames. It is not surprising that great nar-

rowness of vision, joined with singular self-conceit, should lead to such controversial caricature. But it is rather surprising, when the fault has been temperately pointed out and condemned, that Mr Mill should undertake its defence, and become the champion, in Bentham, of that misrepresentation of rival teachers, from which he himself is usually free. The statement, which has given rise to such opposite comments, is in these words.

"This principle (the ascetic) is the antagonist of that which we have just been examining. Those who follow it have a horror of pleasures. Everything which gratifies the senses, in their view, is vicious and criminal. They found morality on privation, and virtue on the renouncement of one's self. In one word, the reverse of the partisans of utility, they approve of everything that tends to diminish enjoyment, they blame everything which tends to augment it."

"This principle has been more or less followed by two classes of men, who in other respects have scarce any resemblance, and even affect a mutual contempt. The one class are philosophers, the other devotees. The ascetic philosophers, animated by the hope of applause, flattered themselves with the idea of seeming to rise above humanity by despising vulgar pleasures. They expect to be paid in reputation and glory for all the sacrifices which they seem to make to the severity of their maxims. The ascetic devotees are foolish people, tormented by vain terrors. Man, in their eyes, is but a degenerate being, who ought to punish himself without ceasing for the crime of being born, and never to turn off his thoughts from that gulf of eternal misery which is ready to open beneath his feet. Still, the martyrs to these absurd opinions have, like all others, a fund of hope.

Independent of the worldly pleasures attached to the reputation of sanctity, these atrabilious pietists flatter themselves that every moment of voluntary pain here below will procure them an age of happiness in another life. Thus even the ascetic principle reposes upon some false idea of utility. It acquired its ascendancy only through mistake. This mistake consists in representing the Deity, in words, as a Being of infinite benevolence, yet ascribing to Him prohibitions and threats which are the attributes of an implacable being, who uses his power only to satisfy his malevolence. We might ask these ascetic theologians, what life is good for if not for the pleasures it procures us, and what pledge have we for the goodness of God in another life, if He has forbidden the enjoyment of this?"

"The devotees have carried the ascetic principle much farther than the philosophers. These confined themselves to censuring pleasures, the religious sects have turned the infliction of pain into a duty. The Stoics said that pain was not an evil, the Jansenists maintained that it was actually a good. The philosophical party never reproved pleasures in the mass, but only those which it called gross and sensual, while it exalted the pleasures of sentiment and the understanding. Always despised and disparaged under its true name, pleasure was received and applauded, when it took the titles of honour, glory, reputation, decorum, or self-esteem."

On this passage, and one which follows, describing the principle of sympathy and antipathy, Dr Whewell has observed that they are not true descriptions of any views ever held by moralists, and are almost too extravagant to be accepted even as good caricatures. Mr Mill undertakes their advocacy. In his review of Bentham he claims

for him in his account of "sympathy and antipathy" the eminent merit of first pointing out that the phrases he ridicules "contain no argument." In the review of Dr Whewell he goes further, and justifies the previous description in these words:—

"Undoubtedly no one has set up, in opposition to the 'greatest happiness' principle, a 'greatest unhappiness' principle as the standard of virtue. But it was Bentham's business not merely to discuss the avowed principles of his opponents, but to draw out those which, without being professed as principles, were implied in detail, or were essential to support the judgments passed in particular cases. His own doctrine being that the increase of pleasure and prevention of pain were the proper end of all moral rules, he had for his opponents all who contended that pleasure could ever be an evil, or pain a good, in itself apart from its consequences. Now this, whatever Dr Whewell may say, the religious ascetics did. They held that self-mortification or even self-torture, practised for its own sake, and not for the sake of any useful end, was meritorious. It matters not that they may have expected to be rewarded for these merits by consideration in this world, or by the favour of an invisible tyrant in the world to come. So far as this life was concerned, their doctrine required it to be supposed that pain was a thing to be sought, and pleasure to be avoided. Bentham generalised this into a maxim, which he called the principle of asceticism. The Stoics did not go so far, they stopped halfway. They did not say that pain was a good, and pleasure an evil. But they said, and boasted of saying, that pain is no evil, and pleasure no good, and this is all and more than all that Bentham imputes to them, as may be seen by any one who reads

that chapter of his work. This, however, was enough to place them, equally with the ascetics, in direct opposition to Bentham, since they denied his supreme end to be an end at all."

This defence of Bentham and rebuke of Dr Whewell, as coming from a professed logician, is very strange. It assumes that Bentham is blamed for treating those as opponents, who did not really differ from his views in any degree. But that is not the real charge. It is that he assigned to these opponents, because they differed from him, a principle the exact antithesis of his own, which no one but a lunatic could ever hold. In plain words, to give point to his strictures, and simplify his polemic, he commits a controversial falsehood. No one, it is owned, had ever set up a "greatest unhappiness" principle. Yet this is exactly what Bentham says the ascetic moralists had done. And this statement clearly deserves moral censure. Even ascetics, however despised by himself or his followers, come certainly within the shelter of the Divine precept, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

The reasoning of Mr Mill is of this singular kind. It is wrong to charge Bentham with ascribing to his opponents an absurd doctrine they never held, because, in spite of Dr Whewell's complaint, they really held a doctrine quite distinct from that of Bentham himself, as well as from that he ascribed to them.

There is surely a wide difference between teaching that all pleasure is evil, and all pain good, or that the true aim of right action is to diminish enjoyment, and a simple averment that the pleasant and the good are not the same, and that habitual self-denial in this life may be the true preparation for the fullest enjoyment in a life to come.

But the excuse goes further. It was the business of Bentham, his apologist says, not merely to discuss the professed principles of his opponents, but to draw out those which were implied without being expressed, and which were essential to support their practical judgments. This duty, however, if it be a duty at all, is subject to one plain condition. A clear distinction ought always to be made between doctrines really held by those from whom we differ, and our own opinions or inferences as to the principles they imply, or the results to which they lead. Herein consists the whole difference between honest and searching controversy and calumnious falsehood. Dr Whewell made no charge against Bentham for having attempted, by a logical process, to show that the doctrine of the Stoics, or the practice of devotees, must involve the paradoxical conclusion that the right end of all moral action is to diminish enjoyment. The charge really brought against him was that no such attempt was made, being plainly impracticable, and that he substitutes ridicule for reasoning, by imputing to them a most absurd principle they never held. The complaint is perfectly true. The imputation and the ridicule are themselves ridiculous, and Mr Mill's attempt, by a process of reasoning, to disprove Dr Whewell's charge, is only a fuller confirmation of its justice and truth.

But the steps of Mr Mill's argument are as faulty as the statement he would vindicate is untrue. The religious ascetics, it is said, contended that pleasure is sometimes an evil and pain a good, apart from their consequences, and therefore Bentham counted them rightly among his opponents. Be it so. This Dr Whewell never denied, as Mr Mill affirms him to have done. It is one thing, however, to deny that all pleasures are good, and quite ano-

ther, to affirm that all pleasure is evil. It is strange for a logician to confound these things together. And next, the notion that these ascetics viewed actions or sufferings wholly apart from their consequences is abandoned as soon as it has been affirmed. No attempt is made to prove their more limited denial of Bentham's doctrine, that the pleasant and the good are the same, to be an error. In his later work Mr Mill himself accepts the view that pleasures differ in kind and excellence as well as in quantity. By this concession he thus approaches more than half way towards the doctrine, which, as held by the Christian ascetics, he has before condemned.

A second description of their principle is then given, that self-mortification and even self-torture, practised for its own sake, is meritorious. This is not the same with the first. A new Pharisaic element of human merit has been introduced. In the very next sentence, however, this Proteus of the ascetic theory takes a third form. Instead of practising austerities for their own sake, and for no worthy end, a very opposite description is now given. They "expected to be rewarded by reputation in the world, or the favour of an invisible tyrant in the life to come." Here Mr Mill cannot admit a plain fact, without colouring and distorting it by his own prejudices. For these ascetics, as a class, certainly did not believe that the God of the Bible was a tyrant, but a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness. But even on his own view of their opinions, they were very far indeed from practising austerities for their own sake. They merely took into account a far wider range of expected consequences than secular utilitarians, from their want of religious faith and hope, are able to do.

The argument now reaches a fourth stage. This

expectation of theirs, it is said, "matters not." Not certainly as to the wisdom of their conduct, if this opinion of theirs was only a superstitious fancy. But as to the moral principle or law by which they were guided, clearly it matters everything. If this last description of them be true, it settles at once the true nature of their moral theory. They could then be no patrons of a rival system, but one special class of the genus, utilitarians. They would have chosen Bentham's own revised maxim, of aiming at "the greatest happiness on the whole," long before he was born. And they would differ only by introducing into their own method of moral calculation elements of the most important kind, which he passes by in silence, or rejects as visionary and unreal.

From this fruitless attempt of Mr Mill to repel Dr Whewell's charge, I return to the passage of Bentham, on which the discussion has arisen. At every step some important moral question is overlooked, and passed in silence, on which a right view of the whole subject must really depend.

First, it is said, the ascetics "have a horror of pleasures. Everything which gratifies the senses, in their view, is odious and criminal." Here, at the first step, the confusion of thought begins. Pleasure is used in an ambiguous sense. In the statement itself it is restricted to sensible or animal pleasures, for it is clearly untrue that the ascetics had a horror for the pleasures of piety, or speaking generally, for those of reputation and self-esteem. But in the exposition of utilitarianism the word is taken in its widest sense, and includes the highest as well as the lowest, enjoyment of whatever kind. The sharp contrast alleged is thus a mere verbal illusion. It is possible to renounce, and even to abhor, all sensible pleasures, and still

to abide by the principle of seeking, on the whole, the greatest, truest, and highest enjoyment. It is possible to condemn a large class of pleasures for reasons wholly unsound, and still, instead of setting up a rival maxim to that of "the greatest happiness," to be guided in reality by that principle alone.

A second description follows. The ascetics "founded morality on privation, and virtue on the renouncement of one's self." This merely places them among disciples of the Great Teacher who said, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. He that findeth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." To reject the principle wholly, as Bentham seems here to do, must involve a claim to be a wiser and better moralist than Christ himself. To found a scheme of morals on pure self-indulgence, as Bentham has striven to do, is at least as hard a task as to found it simply on self-denial. But in either case this is the crucial question: What is the self to be indulged or gratified, and what the self to be denied? Many or most ascetics may have erred greatly in the application of their principle. It is a very imperfect half-truth, when it stands alone. But as a class, they had a truer conception of the hard moral problem which grows out of a joint presence in man of a worse and a better self, of a lower and a higher nature, than Bentham and his disciples or admirers have ever attained.

Next, these ascetics "approve everything which tends to diminish enjoyment, and blame everything which tends to augment it." Here the untruth is of the most plain and palpable kind. It would imply that these Christian ascetics, as a class, did all in their power to empty heaven, and people hell; and instead of aiming earnestly at

eternal happiness, laboured of set purpose to make themselves and others miserable for ever.

The ascetic philosophers, we are next informed, expected to be paid in reputation and glory for their severe maxims. They never reproved pleasures in the mass, but degraded those of sense compared with those of sentiment and the understanding. It was rather a preference for one class than a total exclusion of the other. How ridiculous, then, to make them one of two classes, who held an ascetic principle, that the true end of right action is to diminish, not to increase enjoyment! From Bentham's own admission it is plain that they held no such maxim, but rather the direct reverse. Their real doctrine, that pleasures differ in kind as to their goodness, is far truer and sounder than his own. Even Mr Mill, who labours here to excuse this caricature of their opinions, adopts it as the only sound and reasonable view in his later work.

But a further question must arise. If the view of these philosophers were merely absurd, why should they expect to be paid for their sacrifices in reputation and glory? How can we explain that such a hope should be entertained, and even largely fulfilled? Nature, Bentham says, has placed man under the absolute empire of pleasure and pain. And no doubt it is natural to shrink from all pain, and to choose and pursue whatever pleases the senses. Yet it seems that those who resist this impulse, and forego pleasure and endure pain for some worthy object, and who learn, in Milton's words,

> To scorn delights, and live laborious days,

are so highly esteemed by their fellows, that the glory thus achieved may even form a compensation for the sacrifices they have made. There must thus be a widespread

feeling, even among those who yield to these powerful influences, that it is nobler and more honourable to refuse and reject their absolute dominion. The love of sensible pleasure, and the avoidance of sensible pain, do not then comprise or constitute the whole nature of man. There must be some higher faculty, which judges when pleasures are to be sought or foregone, when pain is simply to be avoided, or boldly encountered and patiently endured. Heroic virtue itself may be rare. But some conviction of its excellence and beauty must be deep-seated in the heart of man, or else the expectations of these philosophers could never have been fulfilled. They would have been despised as mere fools, rather than held in special honour by the general voice of their fellow-men.

The religious ascetics, however, come in for the largest share of Bentham's displeasure and scorn. Yet no sooner has he defamed them as holding a doctrine purely absurd, than he convicts his own charge of utter falsehood. "These atrabilious pietists," he says, "flatter themselves that every instant of voluntary pain here below will procure them an age of happiness in the life to come." If such was their motive, plainly they were utilitarians, though of a species widely different from his own. A different estimate of the best means for securing the greatest amount of happiness is foolishly confounded with something wholly different, the mental lunacy of a so-called ascetic principle, consisting in the deliberate rejection of all enjoyment, and the choice of pain and misery.

The oscillation of thought, in these paragraphs of Bentham, is provoking and incessant. His ascetic devotees, first of all, are senseless anti-utilitarians. Next, they are far-looking, but deceived utilitarians, who expected ages of happiness for each moment of self-torture

or self-denial. Thirdly, they are anti-utilitarians once more, who went beyond the Stoics, and held pain in itself to be a good. And lastly, they were both at once; for they accepted the principle of all sound morals and good laws, that pleasures are to be avoided, when they lead to greater pain or loss, and inferred from it that all pleasure alike is evil, and, with a few indulgences for human weakness, should be the object of universal prohibition! And this charge against them is deduced from the premise, that they forbade pleasures which, in their view, would involve some immensely greater loss in the life to come. It is this wonderful series of contradictions of which Mr Mill undertakes the especial patronage. It forms the porch to the new philosophy which is to constitute its author the Bacon of moral science, and ensure him one of the highest places among the intellectual benefactors of mankind!

Let us now endeavour to gain some insight into the real question, which Bentham by his caricature, and Mr Mill by his apology, have done their utmost to involve in mist and darkness. There is a great truth wrapped up in utilitarianism. There is another truth, and one still deeper, inwrought into the texture of Christian asceticism, and the school which has some affinities with it, heathen Stoicism. How may we trace the connection between them, and find a bridge of transition from the lower and more superficial to the higher and more mysterious truth?

Let us begin from Bentham's own starting-point. Pleasure is good, and pain is evil. It is natural and instinctive to choose one, and avoid the other. Nature has placed us under the double empire of their attractive and repulsive powers. Hence arises a first law of action, which is not moral, but purely instinctive, to pursue pleasure and avoid pain. "Rejoice, O young man, in

thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes." Here this first maxim pauses, and goes no higher. And sometimes, instead of completing the sacred text, it passes into an opposite and more comprehensive direction: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

But utilitarianism, from Epicurus down to Bentham, cannot rest in this first and lowest stage of Hedonics, in which present impulses are the supreme law, and the direct empire of pleasure and pain, from moment to moment, is absolute and supreme. This despotism needs to be changed into a limited and constitutional monarchy. The lessons of experience come in. All pleasures are not to be indulged, because some of them have bad effects. All pains are not to be avoided; some of them are found to be medicinal, and have good consequences. And thus, out of the vast sea of Hedonics, where each rippling of the waves is a momentary pleasure, that sparkles for an instant and disappears for ever, the virtue of Prudence, like a sea-born Venus,

> Far fleeted by the purple island sides,

rises slowly to preside over this ocean of perpetual change, and receives a kind of worship as the supreme guide of human action, the tutelary divinity of a new moral world.

This is the utilitarian stage of Ethics. Its main conception is simple. All the pleasures or pains which result from every act or course of action are to be summed into one total; and the character of this total, as the pleasures or pains are in excess, and in excess to a less or greater amount, decides the question of right or wrong, of moral good or moral evil.

But here further and deeper questions intrude themselves. Of these three are the most important. How far ought our view to travel onward in foresight of those consequences, on which this moral decision must depend? What rule or principle must guide us in our estimate of those pleasures or pains, of which the total is composed? What deeper lessons are taught and implied by this strange fact, on which prudent utilitarianism is based, that pleasure may be the cause of greater pain, and pain of greater pleasure? When these three questions have received a right and true answer, a sacred fire will have been kindled, by which gross and vulgar utilitarianism will be consumed and destroyed. There will arise phœnix-like from its ashes a nobler vision of self-denying, ascetic virtue; or of that highest and Christ-like form of moral excellence, which aims, by wise and willing self-sacrifice, at glory, honour and immortality, the garland of the hero, or the martyr's crown.

And first, how far ought our wise foresight of consequences to extend? Here there comes at once into view the broad contrast between Bentham and Paley, or a religious and a non-religious form of the utilitarian theory. Is there, or is there not, a life to come, that will endure for ever? Have we, or have we not, any means of knowing, either by natural reason, or supernatural revelation, the connection between a present course of conduct in this life, and results, joyful or sorrowful, in such a life to come? If such a life has been revealed, or may be inferred by human reason, and any light exists on its connection with present things, every theory of moral consequences, which looks only to results in the present life, must be senseless and irrational. The remark of Paley is here most true: "While the infidel mocks at the super-

stitions of the vulgar, and insults over their credulous fears, their childish errors, or fantastic rites, it does not occur to him to observe that the most preposterous device by which the weakest devotee ever believed that he was securing the happiness of a future life is more rational than unconcern about it. On this subject nothing is so absurd as indifference, no folly so contemptible as thoughtlessness and levity."

Secular utilitarianism can be justified only by one of these three assumptions: that there is no future life, that its happiness is wholly independent of, and unaffected by, our present conduct, or else that the connection, however real it may be, is wholly unrevealed and unknown. Now each of these alternatives is an equal denial of the Christian faith. All calculations, like those of Bentham, in which the doctrine of a life to come, and the promises and warnings of the gospel, are kept wholly out of sight, are little better than a kind of solemn trifling, which must tend rapidly to sink and degenerate into mischievous folly. They would be completely worthless, if it were not for another great truth, taught alike by reason and Scripture, that the consequences of actions, even here, though liable to many causes of strong disturbance, depend mainly on those true laws of moral sequence or retribution, which will find their perfect, undisturbed development in the life to come. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." And this reaping, though at present in part only, begins even here. Our earthly life is a kind of seed-bed or nursery, where those plants first begin to bloom, which are to blossom out more fully and clearly in the Paradise of God.

The ascetic devotee, who renounced all sensible pleasures, or practised hard and painful austerities, would not

thereby contradict in the least the doctrine of utility, or the so-called "greatest happiness principle," when taken in its simplest and most proper meaning. He would merely avoid one grand fault of the secular utilitarians, though he often at the same time introduced another in its stead. He would escape the great and evident folly of reckoning the very transient results of right and wrong deeds, in this short and fleeting life, as far more important than their eternal issues. The error introduced, which tends to neutralize the gain, is a superstitious view of the laws of duty prescribed and enforced in the gospel. The great disease of asceticism is when Stoical pride or Pharisaic self-righteousness replaces the lessons of Christian humility and love, and a painful discipline is invented, of suffering or self-torture, to render the soul acceptable to God; instead of accepting the discipline He has himself appointed, and seeking to tread in the footsteps of the Great Pattern of self-denying love.

But whether our view is bounded by the grave, or extends to the life to come, a second question remains. What principle is to guide us in our relative estimate of pains and pleasures? The old Epicurean doctrine here diverges from the Stoics and the Academy, and the same separation and contrast is renewed in modern times. Bentham and Paley, whose views on the last subject are in entire contrast, here agree together, and range themselves on the side of Epicurus. Pleasures, in their scheme, do not differ in kind, but in quantity, nearness, or intensity alone. Mr Mill, in his later treatise, forsakes Bentham on this point, and ranges himself on the opposite side, along with the old disciples of the Academy, or modern advocates of the morality of intuition. The pleasure of a sugarplum, and of witnessing or performing

a noble action, cannot, in their view, be reduced to a common unit, or summed up in a total, which admits of numerical calculation. Some pleasures are higher, others lower in kind. "It is better," says Mr Mill, "to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied, a Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied." "Neither pleasures nor pains are homogeneous, and pain is always heterogeneous with pleasure." But by this one admission, the whole of Bentham's ethics, as a practical system, is undermined. Its very foundation is overthrown. The new moral arithmetic becomes impossible in its own nature. For it strives to sum up elements diverse and heterogeneous, and then to frame totals out of them, on the amount of which the moral character of every action is wholly to depend.

The admission involves a further result, which Mr Mill fails to notice. If pleasures are owned to differ in kind as well as quantity, so that some are of a higher class, and others of a lower, these differences may include moral as well as intellectual elements. These pleasures may not only differ in their rank and dignity, but by features of moral contrast. Is a thing always really good, because some one or other is pleased with it? Is a person good, or is he enjoying a real good, because he is pleased with something or other, whatever it may be? Here common sense gives a plain answer. Men may sometimes be greatly pleased, and still be pleased amiss.

> He ceased, for both seemed highly pleased, and Death
> Grinned horrible a ghastly smile.

The pleasures of bad men may be their shame, not from the fact of their being pleased at all, but from the nature of that which pleases them. That which delights the

gross, the base, the licentious and the impure, may cause intense pain and disgust to the pure, the upright, and the noble, in mind and heart. When the drunkards, of whom the Psalmist prophesies, made songs upon the Son of God, no doubt they had a pleasure in their drunken and wicked ribaldry. Pleasures are good, not because they are pleasures, but because those who experience them are pleased aright. And this lesson of plain common sense is confirmed and reechoed by the clear testimony of Holy Scripture. For pleasure there includes the widest moral extremes. It speaks of pleasures eagerly to be desired, and highly praised, and of others to be condemned and abhorred. Thus it is written of the blessedness of the risen Saviour, "In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." On the other hand, the worst and lowest forms of human guilt are marked by the double character of evil men, that "their soul delighteth in their abominations," and that they not only commit wicked acts themselves, but take a sympathizing pleasure in them that do them.

Here, then, we pass on to a second stage in that change by which the arithmetic of Bentham's utilitarianism has to be elevated and transformed, before we can attain a genuine morality. It is not simply true that we need to include, in the range of consequences, the lessons of Christian faith, and the doctrine of a future judgment, and the life to come. We need also to distinguish the various kinds of pleasures, and not only their degrees of dignity and worth, but their contrasts of health and disease, of reality and illusion, of moral good or moral evil. The doctrine, which Bentham ascribes without reason to the ascetics, that all pleasures are evil, is simply foolish and absurd. Its converse, which he maintains, that all

pleasures alike are good in themselves, apart from their consequences, is corrupt and immoral. For it makes the mere fact of being pleased a sufficient proof of being pleased aright, and promotes the disgusting orgies of sensual vice or unblushing profligacy to rank, in their own nature, side by side with the delights of heroic virtue, or the joys of pure and spotless spirits in the presence of God.

But a further question still demands an answer. How is it that pain can lead to pleasure, or pleasure be the cause of pain? Utilitarianism can escape from the charge of justifying a sensual life, and the indulgence of every instinct of man's animal nature, only by laying stress on the future consequences of actions, and on the fact, which experience proves, that some pleasures, like those of intemperance, lead to evils and sorrows which far outweigh their immediate gain. Now surely a true philosophy should look deeper, and ask how it is that this comes to pass. If pleasure be the only good, and pain the only evil, how can the good of this moment cause the evil of the next, or evil now done or suffered become the source of future and larger good? Like produces like throughout the whole range of animal and vegetable life. The offspring ever resembles the parent. Is this law reversed in the world of morals? Can that which is the only good be parent of that which is the only evil; or the only evil, in its turn, become parent of the only good? And can this strange paradox be carried so far, that the qualities of the parent are annulled and reversed by the opposite character of the many children, so that many pleasures have to be renounced, because they generate greater pain, and some pains to be chosen, because they produce and bring forth greater pleasures? How is it that the maxim "nocet

empta dolore voluptas," which embodies this fact of experience, has become a moral aphorism of the most familiar kind?

This cardinal objection to Bentham has been enforced by Dr Calderwood in his Handbook, as by many earlier writers. "That the painful may lead to the pleasurable," he says, "is proof that pleasure and pain are not ends in themselves, but simply attendants on personal action. Of contraries, one cannot produce the other."

This great fact, which utilitarian writers have to make prominent, in order to free themselves from the reproach of teaching a doctrine of sensuality, implies the truth of one out of two alternatives. It must result, either from the actual constitution of the world, capable of reversal by the will of the Supreme Creator, or else it must be viewed as a necessary adjunct, inherent in the very nature and objects of the pleasures and pains themselves.

The former view is one which arises spontaneously in the minds of the selfish, the profligate, and the licentious. It gives birth, in secret, to ten thousand hard and discontented thoughts, and blasphemies against the Divine goodness. Men follow blindly the craving for immediate pleasure. They seek to gratify it, even when it assumes the lowest and most degrading forms. And when these pleasures, which they have sought so eagerly, prove like apples of Sodom, and turn to ashes in their mouth, they complain of the cruel fate, which robs them of happiness, when a better constitution of things, or a kinder and more benevolent Providence, might still have secured it to them. The words of the wisest of men are then fulfilled, "The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord."

The working of this common illusion is conspicuous in

Bentham s foot-note, where he points out what he conceives to be the folly of the ascetic devotees. It consists, he says, in ascribing to the Deity prohibitions and threats, which are the attributes of an implacable Being, who uses his power only to satisfy his malevolence. We may ask these ascetic theologians, what life is good for, if not for the pleasures it procures us? What pledge have we for the goodness of God in another life, if He has forbidden the enjoyment of this?"

Here it is plainly assumed that the connection of pain with sequent pleasure, or pleasure with sequent pain, so far as the ascetics are concerned, is wholly of an arbitrary and reversible kind. In this case the argument, assuming the doctrine to be that all pleasures are forbidden, will be simple and decisive. Universal malevolence in this life can never be the pledge or sign of universal benevolence in some other life to come. But then, the objection, on the same hypothesis, lies almost with equal force against Bentham's own view. How can it consist with perfect benevolence, to make pain, in a large class of cases, the constant sequel of certain pleasures, and in another as large, the needful condition for securing them, if the relation is purely a capricious and arbitrary thing? Thus the whole constitution of life, on which the "greatest happiness" philosophers base their lessons of prudence, and reason against the rash indulgence of mere animal pleasures, lies open to the very same charge which has been made against the folly of religious devotees. They can only escape from the same guilt of imputing malevolence to the Divinity, either by shutting their eyes to the facts, and refusing all exercise of reason on the principle to which they make their constant appeal, or by looking below the surface, and tracing it to a deeper truth, which,

once discovered and seen clearly, must prove fatal to their whole theory.

Unless we would justify, then, the foolish complaints of the sensual, the indolent, the immoral and impure, against the constitution of Providence, as a capricious and malevolent source of all their troubles, we must accept the other alternative. The connection between some pleasures and sequent pains, between certain pains and sequent pleasures, is no capricious and arbitrary thing, no result of partial or entire malevolence in the Supreme Will. It depends rather upon an essential contrast in the pleasures or pains, out of which opposite results, though obscured for a time by the manifold complications of human life, inevitably flow. There are pleasures which, in themselves, are good and right. There are others which in themselves, and before the consequences are born, are impure and evil. And the fruit resembles the seed. The children bear the image of their parent. The evil which seems to be good, and pleases because of that illusive semblance, begets consequences only according to its true nature, and not according to that illusive semblance which must soon disappear. The pain endured in the cause of right, in a world where evil still prevails, and fights against the right, though it may be inseparable from the present conflict, yields fruit according to its true character, disguised for a time in that evil world; and must issue, in due season, in triumphant happiness and moral victory. Christian asceticism became corrupt and injurious, just so far as it construed Divine cautions, and prohibitions of sensual vice, into capricious restraints on human enjoyment. In these cases it sought proudly to lay up a stock of merit in a future life, by serving God as a hard and severe taskmaster, and reversed the great maxim of the Apostle, that

He giveth all things richly to enjoy. But all its wiser disciples recognized, in the great law of self-denial, enforced by the example of the Incarnate Son of God, a fundamental truth of morals, not created by the fiat of arbitrary power, but revealed by Divine wisdom and goodness, to guide the steps of His children, amidst snares and pitfalls, into a narrow and upward pathway of life and peace, issuing in eternal glory. In this, its truest and noblest form, it embodies a truth far higher, nobler, and more excellent, than Bentham or those who admire and prize his teaching can ever possibly have attained. It is to such ascetics, in the best sense of the word, and the true spirit of the Gospel, and not to those most busily employed in grinding out duty from the husks of pleasure, that the striking words of Milton in *Comus* most fitly apply.

> Yet some there be that by due steps aspire
> To lay their just hand on the golden key
> That opes the palace of eternity.
> To such mine errand is, and but for such
> I would not soil these bright ambrosial weeds
> With the rank vapours of a sin-worn world.

LECTURE VI.

THE PRINCIPLE OF SYMPATHY AND ANTIPATHY.

The second rival, according to Bentham, of the doctrine of utility, is the Principle of Sympathy and Antipathy. He styles it also Ipsedixitism, the Arbitrary Principle, or the Principle of Caprice. It consists, he says, in appealing to sentiment, and giving no other reason for a moral decision than the decision itself. Several pages are given to a description of its various forms, which Dr Whewell condemns as extravagant ridicule. Mr Mill undertakes his defence, and quotes the passage at length in two reviews. In one case he joins it with an apology, but in the other he ascribes to it some eminent merit. It represents, in his opinion, the cause of progressive morality, in contrast to the blind deification of habit and opinion. The main portion of the statement is as follows :

"What one expects to find in a principle is something that points out some external consideration, as a means of warranting and guiding the internal sentiments of approbation and disapprobation. The expectation is but ill fulfilled by a proposition which does neither more nor less than hold up each of these sentiments as a ground or standard for itself."

"In looking over the catalogue of human actions, says a partisan of this principle, to determine which of them are to be marked with the seal of disapprobation, you need but take counsel of your own feelings. Whatever you find in yourself a propensity to condemn is wrong for that very reason. For the same reason it is also meet for punishment. In what proportion it is adverse to utility, or whether it be adverse to utility at all, makes no difference. In that same proportion also it is meet for punishment. If you hate much, punish much; if you hate little, punish little: punish as you hate. If you hate not at all, punish not at all: the feelings of the soul are not to be overborne and tyrannized by the harsh and rugged dictates of political utility."

"The various systems that have been formed concerning the standard of right and wrong may all be reduced to the principle of sympathy and antipathy. One account may serve for all of them. They consist in so many contrivances for avoiding the obligation of appealing to any external standard, and for prevailing on the reader to accept of the author's sentiment or opinion as a reason for itself. The phrase is different, but the principle is the same. It is curious enough to observe the variety of inventions men have hit upon, and the variety of phrases they have brought forward, in order to conceal from the world, and if possible from themselves, this very general and very pardonable self-sufficiency."

"One man says, he has a thing made on purpose to tell him what is right, and what is wrong, and that it is called a *moral sense;* and then he goes to work at his will, and says, such a thing is right, and such a thing is wrong,—why? 'Because my moral sense tells me it is.'"

"Another man comes and alters the phrase, leaving out

moral, and putting *common* in the room of it. He then tells you, that his *common sense* teaches him what is right and wrong, as much as the other's *moral sense* did; meaning by common sense a sense of some kind or other, which, he says, is possessed by all mankind; the sense of those, whose sense is not the same as the author's, being struck out of the account as not worth taking. This contrivance does better than the other; for a moral sense being a new thing, a man may feel about him a good while, without being able to find it; but common sense is as old as the creation, and there is no man who would not be ashamed to be thought not to have as much of it as his neighbours. It has another great advantage. By appearing to share power, it lessens envy; for when a man gets up on this ground, in order to anathematize those who differ from him, it is not by a *sic volo, sic jubeo*, but by a *velitis, jubeatis*."

"Another man comes and says, that as to a moral sense indeed, he cannot find that he has any such thing; but however he has an understanding, which will do quite as well. This understanding, he says, is the standard of right and wrong, it tells him so and so. All good and wise men understand as he does. If other men's understandings differ in any point from his, so much the worse for them; it is a sure sign that they are either defective or corrupt."

"Another man says that there is an eternal and immutable rule of right; that that rule of right dictates so and so; and then he begins giving you his sentiments upon anything that comes uppermost, and these sentiments, you are to take for granted, are so many branches of the eternal rule of right."

"Another man, or perhaps the same man, it's no matter,

says that there are certain practices conformable, and others repugnant, to the fitness of things; and then he tells you at his leisure what practices are conformable and what repugnant, just as he happens to like a practice or dislike it."

"A great multitude of people are continually talking of the Law of Nature, and then they go on giving you their sentiments about what is right and wrong; and these sentiments, you are to understand, are so many chapters and sections of the law of nature."

"We have one philosopher, who says there is no harm in anything in the world but telling a lie; and that if, for example, you were to murder your own father, this would be only a particular way of saying he was not your father. Of course, when this philosopher sees anything he does not like, he says it is a particular way of telling a lie. It is saying that the act ought to be done, or may be done, when in *truth* it ought not to be done."

"The fairest and openest of them all is that sort of man who speaks out, and says, I am of the number of the elect; now God himself takes care to inform the elect what is right; and that with so good effect that, let them strive ever so, they cannot help not only knowing it, but practising it. If therefore a man wants to know what is right and what is wrong, he has nothing to do but to come to me."

Here, first of all, the subject is obscured by a very defective arrangement of moral creeds or systems. The true distinction is not twofold, but threefold. The basis of moral science may be viewed as objective, subjective, or external. The first of these insists on a fundamental contrast of right and wrong, derived from the perfection

of the Divine nature, and the primary conception of a moral agent, as endued with the power of choice, and exempt from physical compulsion, and thereby made subject to a higher and nobler law of moral obligation. When this doctrine is combined with those lessons of human infirmity and corruption, which are taught alike by Scripture and experience, it leads at once to the best and truest forms of Christian asceticism. For then it reminds us that there is a high and pure standard of moral perfection, which we should strive earnestly to attain; that there is a lower nature, which is ever tempting us, and dragging us downward; and that patient self-denial is needful, in order to realize the just claims of the Divine law, and the true spirit of the Gospel, and to walk in that narrow and upward path, which leads to peace, life, and immortality. Such is the true and noble asceticism, which St Paul has described, 1 Cor. ix. 24—27, and enforced by his own bright example. And it is liable to a double counterfeit, on the right hand, and on the left. This genuine hunger and thirst of Divine righteousness may be then replaced, either by the terrors and fevered anxiety of a guilty conscience, or the false and diseased excitement of spiritual pride. Penances may then be self-imposed, and severe and painful tortures endured, either to banish and silence, if possible, the fear of future punishment, or else to purchase, by a stock of fancied merit, the joys of heaven.

This objective morality, when dissevered from the Christian doctrine of human guilt and corruption, may assume various intellectual forms. Three of these are included in Bentham's enumeration, along with a fourth, of a more theological kind, presented in a brief caricature. Moral Duty may be viewed, with Plato and Cudworth, as

something immutable and eternal; or with Clarke, as resulting from the reason and fitness of things; or with Wollaston, as derived from the essential truth of their real nature. Again, it may be viewed as a Divine landscape, like the good land of promise, which exists before we see it, and abides the same, though we were smitten with moral blindness; a landscape which needs Divine illumination, that we may gaze on it aright, and discover all its wonderful beauty.

These four types of moral thought and speculation are included, by Bentham, as varieties of his Principle of Caprice. But they are really as wide apart from it as the north pole from the south. It is their common axiom that in moral science there is nothing capricious, or dependent on subjective fancies alone, but that it is fixed and firm in its own nature, like the laws of number and of space.

Three other varieties remain, the doctrine of a moral sense, of common sense, and of a moral understanding. These dwell mainly on the subjective aspect of moral truths, or the faculties by which they are perceived, and the emotions of approval or disapproval, of praise and blame, which they awaken in the human heart.

The censures of Bentham, so far as they are aimed against the objective moralists, betray entire forgetfulness of the first conditions of all genuine science. We must believe that there is a God, a Moral Governor of the universe, before we can enter upon the science of Theology. We must believe in space-relations, fixed and definite in their kind, before we can begin the study of Geometry. We must recognize laws of animal structure, with definite uses and aims of particular organs, before there can grow up a science of Physiology. So also the

conception of definite, fixed and abiding moral relations, and of things which ought and ought not to be done, is the first condition and needful postulate of all moral science. Those who insist on this truth merely fulfil the first necessity of all sound and clear ethical reasoning. To charge them on this ground alone with the perverse design to give currency, without examination, to some private fancies of their own on the details of moral duty, is a calumny as groundless as it is offensive. Now this is what Bentham has here done, and it forms the main substance of the passage which Mr Mill unwisely seeks to justify. The paragraph, for instance, which speaks of "an eternal and immutable rule of right" alludes evidently to Cudworth's well-known and learned work. But the remark which follows, that "he retails to you his own particular sentiments, which you are obliged to receive as so many branches of the eternal rule of right," has no shadow of real foundation. One main defect of his work is that he stops short with an unfinished exposition of his main principle, that morality is based on the very nature of things, and no mere result of arbitrary will, and does not enter at all into the development of its actual laws, or the wide variety of personal, social, and religious duties, which alone constitute Ethics a practical science.

The strictures of Bentham have more appearance of truth, when confined to the advocates of a moral sense, of common sense, and of conscience or the moral understanding, as constituting the supreme law of right and wrong. To this general type of thought, Hutcheson, Butler, Reid, Adam Smith, Dr Thomas Brown, and many others, may be referred. This subjective principle, if carried to its extreme, is too narrow to form a proper basis for connected reasoning. So long as the reference is

excluded to fixed moral relations, and truths which come earlier, or lie deeper, than individual experience, and also to later results, which flow onward, almost without limit, from every form of moral activity, the doctrine must contract itself into a mere registration of those emotions of liking or disliking, of praise or blame, which may successively arise in each human conscience and heart. It will thus have no power to distinguish between the most mischievous illusions, and the purest and noblest sentiments of a purified intelligence, and must wholly fail to supply the materials for a genuine science. To fulfil its main object, it must borrow more or less largely from the extremes which enclose it on either side. The emotions, from which it would construct its ethical creed or system, must involve a reference, more or less distinct, either to laws and principles of duty that go before, and awaken them, or else to results that follow after. The starting-point may be personal experience, and the actual record of moral emotions of the heart. But before the principle can rise into the amplitude and dignity of a science, it must expand and enlarge, till it comes to gaze on a firmament of moral truth that rises above us, and speaks of a higher world, or on a wide landscape of moral consequences, that are spread out around and beneath on every side.

The subjective moralists would be justly condemned, if they were to propound the direct study and registry of the moral emotions as the sole basis and main work of ethical science. The error would be much the same as an attempt to replace, by the mere study of the human eye, and its delicate mechanism of vision, the wide range of geometrical truth, with all the vast superstructure of science which is reared on this foundation. But their views are just and sound, so far as they assume a careful

observation of the feelings of the heart, and its emotions of approval and disapproval, when certain kinds of action are set before it, to be the proper and needful starting-point of the whole inquiry. Are these feelings the same with those of simple hope and fear, or the prospect of personal gain or loss? Or do they include a higher element, which no true analysis can resolve into the instinctive desire for pleasure, or prudential reckoning of gain? In this case the pretended analysis, which arrives at such a result, only proves that the knife has done its work too thoroughly, that a corpse has been submitted to scientific dissection, but that the life is gone. Moral inquirers do well to be inductive so far, that they must begin with the question, what is the actual constitution and experience of the human mind as to moral feelings and truths. But if their progress is arrested at this point, it will soon be found impossible to build up what is really and essentially an ideal science by the mere observation of actual occurrences alone.

The Morality of Common Sense has its weak and its strong side. Its weakness consists in the want of unity, simplicity, symmetry, and ideal grandeur. It cleaves to what is real and actual, in a science which must cease to exist, as soon as the contrast between the actual and the ideal has disappeared from view. In this respect it bears some resemblance to those early navigators, who sailed close by headland, islet, and promontory, and feared to entrust themselves to the wide and trackless ocean by the help of the compass and the stars alone. For those stars are often blotted out and hidden by storms and clouds; and the compass might lead to fatal shipwrecks, being a strange, ill-understood mystery, and subject to many unknown causes of variation.

The strength of the doctrine resides in its inductive character, its tone of modesty and caution. It seeks to tread on firm ground. It distrusts abstract theories, and hasty generalizations. It begins by observing the actual sentiments of mankind, and their usual decisions on all the great questions of morals, and then seeks to eliminate from these the more patent causes of error and mutual divergence. It rests content with secondary moral axioms, confirmed by the general verdict and assent of men not wholly ignorant, or enslaved by passion and lust, even when it fails to trace them, upward and outward, into some wider and more comprehensive truth. A due regard to the importance of secondary axioms is a mark of the spirit of genuine induction, and its practical worth has been proved in every branch of physical inquiry. But morals are an ideal science. And hence the application of the principle needs here especial caution, and can only be limited and partial in its extent. We should else be in danger of abandoning the true ideal and standard of moral excellence, and of exalting the customs, opinions, and prejudices of each particular class of men, among whom our lot is cast, into the absolute and proper test of duty and virtue.

The objective moralists have been wrongly grouped by Bentham, along with the subjective or sentimental, under his principle of caprice, and thus a charge has been brought against them, from which, so far as their main doctrine is concerned, they are wholly free. Mr Mill commits an error of the opposite kind. He groups the moralists of emotion and internal feeling, along with those who appeal to reason and eternal truth, under a common complaint that they forsake induction, the method of true and sound philosophy, for mere intuition.

But the sentimental moralists, in principle, are further removed from this fault than utilitarians themselves. Their real danger is rather of an opposite kind. Professor Grote, in Ch. XVII. of his "Examination," has made the following just remarks on this representation of their views.

"Under the notion of intuitive moral systems, Mr Mill seems to confuse two entirely different lines of thought. Of these the sentimental or emotional satisfies itself with attributing great importance to the subjective feeling. The other, the school of duty, variously named according to its various forms, has a strong notion of the reality of facts and relations which the subjective feeling suggests to us; and which reason, they think, makes known to us on other grounds besides. Both schools are noticed by Bentham as hostile to utilitarianism. The one which he saw and described most clearly as such was the emotional. The other he speaks of under the name of asceticism, in a manner not making it readily recognizable as an important part of human thought. Now of these two schools the former is certainly not less inductive than utilitarianism itself. If we define right action to be that which is in accordance with our feelings of kindness, fairness, and generosity, we enunciate a principle which is as capable as the utilitarian of being put to the test of observation"...

"The moralists of last century, who spoke variously of a moral sense, or a faculty which might be made matter of psychological observation, all supposed that in doing this they were following Bacon and Locke, and setting moral philosophy on an inductive basis, on principles of observation, experience and *à posteriori* reason. In fact, if setting aside the truth of one or the other

system, we consider which of the two falls in most with the idea of going only by experience, I think the advantage lies with the emotional system. No fact of experience can be more clear, than that man, whenever he has feelings at all, has feelings of kindness, fairness and generosity, of moral approval of some things, and condemnation of others; and that these feelings, though endlessly various in the particulars, are in substance the same for all men, at least to the same extent that happiness is the same for all. Against this fact utilitarianism sets the consideration, true perhaps, but as compared with the other, possessing something of an *à priori* character, that people may feel wrongly, and that whatever their feelings, it is certain that no action can be good but such as is promotive of some happiness. By what process of thought a morality which consists, in the first instance, of the assumption of a principle like this, and then of deduction from it, can be considered a morality of experience or observation, as against a morality resting immediately on the experience of human feeling, is what I cannot understand."

Mr Mill justifies the strictures of Bentham on the subjective moralists by the following plea. "He did not mean that people ever asserted that they approved or condemned actions only because they felt disposed to do so. He meant that they do it without asserting it; that they find certain feelings in themselves, take for granted that these feelings are the right ones, and when called on to say anything in justification produce phrases which mean nothing but the fact of the approbation and disapprobation itself. A great part of all the ethical reasoning in books and in the world is of this sort. A feeling is not proved to be right, and exempted from the necessity of

justifying itself because the writer or speaker is not only conscious of it in himself, but expects to find it in other people. The most senseless and pernicious feelings can as easily be raised to the utmost intensity by inculcation, as hemlock and thistles can be raised to luxuriant growth by sowing them instead of wheat. Bentham, therefore, did not judge too severely a kind of ethics, whereby any implanted sentiment, which is tolerably general, may be erected into a moral law, binding under penalties on all mankind...The contest between the morality which appeals to an external standard, and that which grounds itself on internal conviction, is the contest of progressive morality against stationary, of reason and argument against the deification of mere opinion and habit. The doctrine that the existing order of things is the natural order is as vicious in morals as in physics, society, and government."

To justify, then, the strictures of Bentham on the subjective moralists, a double charge is brought against them. They are intuitivists, and desert that inductive method, to which physical science owes all its signal triumphs. And again, they are prone to adopt and register the actual moral feelings of mankind, without submitting them to some higher test, and requiring them to give account of themselves, and prove their agreement with the calculations of utility, and the principle that the greatest collective amount of human happiness is the only proper aim for each individual of mankind.

Now so far as Moral Science is purely inductive, it must simply inquire which actions, or classes of actions, are found by experience to awaken sentiments of moral approval or blame. It would be consistent in refusing to go further, and enter on the later inquiry whether all

the acts so commended by the conscience, do really produce a maximum of human felicity. Utilitarianism, again, is so far inductive, that it refers to experience to decide what things are pleasant or painful, and also in what cases, or to what extent, pleasure may lead to pain, or pain to pleasure. But in its main and fundamental principle, that the rightness or wrongness of actions is to be determined by their tendency to the greatest sum of pleasures, diminished by the smallest amount of pain, and by that alone, it is plainly intuitive first, and then deductive, and deserts the path of induction altogether.

A moral feeling, Mr Mill remarks, "is not exempted from the necessity of justifying itself." The doctrine is true, and of deep importance. It implies a fundamental conception of moral rightness, which partakes of the character of necessity, and lies deeper than all the individual convictions that men may form as to the details of moral duty. But for this very reason it subverts his whole defence of Bentham's strictures on the moralists of Conscience, the Moral Sense, or Common Sense. Their true fault is not that for which he really condemns them, their recognition of a final and ultimate principle in morals, of an intuitive kind. It is that they exalt the imperfect decisions of individual conscience too high, and stretch the province of experience and observation beyond its just limit in an ideal science. For the great question in morals is not what men do feel, but what they ought to feel. In its details it must depend largely on materials borrowed from the actual experiences of human life. But it destroys itself, when it accepts the maxim "whatever is, is right," or undertakes to canonize and consecrate, as Divine utterances, all the conflicting views of duty, the jarring and discordant voices, claiming to be voice of

conscience, which prevail amongst the multitudes of mankind. It may seek to attain tests of right action and of moral goodness, either from great truths rising above the details of momentary feeling, like stars of the firmament, or from results that flow out, in ever-widening circles, from every action and every agent, like waves on the surface of a troubled sea. But without some first principles, no science can possibly be reared. Subjective moralists, in their dread of abstract theory, and their greater trust in the instinctive whispers of conscience than in artificial processes of laborious calculation of results, may have shrunk too much from those wider generalizations which are almost essential for scientific progress. But the charges which Bentham has aimed against them are due mainly to the superficial and mechanical view which he has taken of the whole subject of morals. If he had paused in his sarcastic depreciation of his rivals to look below the surface, he must have seen that the same objection really lies against his own theory, that it throws us back on the inquiry, why we ought to pursue the maxim of seeking the greatest amount of collective happiness, and that a seeming tautology or repetition, in the view of careless readers, must be involved in the definitions and axioms of every genuine science.

LECTURE VII.

ON MORAL INQUIRY AND CHRISTIAN FAITH.

THE relation between honest inquiry into the foundations, principles, and main outlines of moral truth, and deep and settled religious convictions, is a subject plainly of the highest practical importance. Mr Mill maintains that the two ideas are incompatible, and writes upon it, in his review of Dr Whewell's *Elements of Morality*, in these words.

"Inasmuch as mental activity of any kind is better than torpidity, and bad solutions of the great questions of philosophy are preferable to a lazy ignoring of their existence, whoever has taken so active a part as Dr Whewell in this movement may lay claim to considerable merit.

"Unfortunately it is not in the nature of bodies constituted like the English Universities, even when stirred up into something like mental activity, to send forth thought of any but one description. There have been universities which brought together into a body the most vigorous thinkers and ablest teachers, whatever the conclusions to which their thinking led them. But in the English Universities no thought can find place except that which can reconcile itself with orthodoxy. They are ecclesiastical institutions; and it is the essence of

all churches to vow adherence to a set of opinions made up and prescribed, it matters little whether three or thirteen centuries ago. Men will some day open their eyes, and perceive how fatal a thing it is that the instruction of those who are intended to be the guides and governors of mankind should be confided to persons thus pledged. If the opinions they were pledged to were every one as true as any fact in physical science, and had been adopted, not as they almost always are, on trust and authority, but as the result of the most diligent examination of which the mind of the recipient is capable; even then the engagement under penalties always to adhere to the opinions once assented to, would debilitate and lame the mind, and unfit it for progress, still more for assisting the progress of others. The person who has to think more of what an opinion leads to, than of what is the evidence of it, cannot be a philosopher, or a teacher of philosophers. Of what value is the opinion on any subject, of a man of whom every one knows that by his profession he must hold that opinion? And how can intellectual vigour be fostered by the teaching of those, who, even as a matter of duty, would rather that their pupils were weak and orthodox, than strong with freedom of thought? Whoever thinks that persons thus tried are fitting depositories of the trust of educating a people must think that the proper object of intellectual education is not to strengthen and cultivate the intellect, but to make sure of its adopting certain conclusions; that, in short, in the exercise of the thinking faculty, there is something, either religion, or conservatism, or peace, more important than truth. When persons, bound by the vows of an established clergy, enter into the paths of higher speculation, and endeavour to make a philosophy,

either purpose or instinct will direct them to the kind of philosophy best fitted to prop up the doctrines to which they are pledged. And when those doctrines are so prodigiously in arrear of the general progress of thought as the doctrines of the Church of England now are, the philosophy resulting will have a tendency, not to promote, but to arrest progress."

The assertions here made, so far as they involve questions of simple fact, are strangely charged and loaded with the prejudices of the critic, and depart widely from the real truth. The English Universities cannot, without a wild license in the abuse of terms, be affirmed to have sent forth, on moral subjects, thought of one description alone. To speak of Cambridge only, there can scarcely be a wider diversity than between Bacon, Milton, Clarke, More, Cudworth, Hartley, Rutherford, Waterland, Paley, Coleridge, Whewell, Grote and Maurice. It may also well be doubted whether any university, English or foreign, was ever based on the principle of entire indifference to the creed and teaching of its various professors, or can have accepted a vague reputation for intellectual vigour as a higher qualification than the adoption of any definite faith whatever, either in science or theology. It is a libel as odious as comprehensive, to say that the acceptance of the Christian creeds, or at least of the thirty-nine Articles, is, almost in every instance, the result of blind trust in authority, and scarcely ever the sequel of thoughtful, honest, and sober inquiry. And this charge comes with the very worst grace from a writer, whose early training, according to his own description, was a carefully devised experiment how a youthful mind might be hermetically sealed, as in an exhausted receiver, against the slightest intrusion of

religious truth. Scarcely one Christian student in a thousand has had orthodoxy imposed on him with such jealous care and relentless rigour, as was employed, in this case, to shut out all access to religious teaching of any kind whatever.

It is a further misstatement that religious subscriptions involve an engagement, under severe penalties, never to change an opinion once professed. No honest person, indeed, will consent to be paid for teaching doctrines he does not believe. So far, then, as endowments are left for the purpose of securing teachers of a definite system of religious doctrine, a sacrifice must be involved in such a change of convictions as unfits for the fulfilment of a specific trust. If the objection has any weight, it is not confined to religious endowments, but must extend impartially to trusts and uses of every description. No provision must be made for transmitting the acquired knowledge and wisdom of mankind to the coming generation, lest a selfish interest should be enlisted on the side of what is already believed. Such a principle, impartially applied, must be fatal alike to nearly all the settled institutions of society.

Again, the active use of moral faculties is clearly a duty binding on those who have received them, and are responsible for their exercise. But whether this activity is a gain or loss must plainly depend on the direction it takes, and the forms it may assume. A nation abandoned to sloth and moral indolence is no doubt a humbling and pitiable sight. But it is less odious, and certainly less dangerous, than a pandemonium of malicious fiends.

Imperfect solutions of moral questions, where truth is mingled with obscurity and partial error, may be preferable to careless neglect, and a total blank of thought on

the noblest subjects which can occupy the minds of reasonable men. But falsehoods must be mischievous, in exact proportion to the importance of the subjects in which those falsehoods are believed. Nothing can be more opposite to the true lessons of moral science, than to glorify and extol mental activity, however erroneous in the principles from which it starts, and the conclusions to which it leads. An immoral philosophy, and for the same reason a false philosophy in morals, must be hurtful and dangerous; and the danger is only aggravated and increased by the energy, zeal, and ability, with which it may be propagated and maintained.

A second question of vital importance lies at the root of Mr Mill's complaint against the English Universities. Until all religious tests were abolished, he judges them incapable, by their very constitution, of any genuine culture of ethical philosophy. To sit wholly loose to every form of religious faith, and to be willing to cast off every fixed creed, like worn-out garments, at the shortest notice, seems to be viewed by him as the first and main condition of moral progress, or of the honest investigation and effectual discovery of ethical truth. A startling and prodigious assertion, though propounded with a quiet assurance, almost sublime in its audacity, as if it were a nearly self-evident truth. A doctrine exactly opposite, that the silent neglect, or open rejection, of religious faith, is the most fatal of all hindrances to genuine moral progress, has been the constant and settled creed of all thoughtful men, who believe in the authority of the Gospel of Christ as a message divinely revealed. Which of these two opinions is more agreeable to sound reason and the lessons of experience?

The ground of Mr Mill's statement appears to be, that

the first requisite of moral research, in order to be real and effective, is freedom from prejudice of every kind. The inquirer must start fair, with no preconceived opinions or acquired convictions, in his voyage of moral discovery. His mind should be like a sheet of white paper, prepared to receive and retain, with equal readiness, whatever impressions may result from its own original and unbiassed investigations. The answer is very simple. Such a state of mind is impossible and Utopian. Even if desirable, it could not be really attained, and it can never be proved that it is even desirable. No one old enough to investigate moral questions at all ever entered on his task in such a state of absolute equilibrium between creeds and anti-creeds of every conceivable diversity. The ideal state of strict neutrality is unattainable. It must involve an absolute suspension of the thinking faculty, and of all the influences of education, until the moment when the aspiring neophyte is to enter on his impartial and profound inquiries. The *Autobiography* shows that few have ever been further removed than Mr Mill himself from starting in this neutral and carefully balanced condition. He was trained in his boyhood with a discipline almost Spartan in its rigour, under a father, who exacted a stern monopoly of mental influence over his son, and whose master passion seems to have been a rooted aversion to every current form of religious faith. It is not surprising, then, that a like aversion to creeds and dogmas of every kind should have been inwrought into the texture of his mind, and become to him a sort of second nature, before the time when his original researches in moral and general philosophy first began.

All truths of every kind are really helpful to each

other; and false views on any one subject, so far as they extend, must hinder the growth of true knowledge in every other field of thought. And this must be eminently true of subjects so conterminous and closely allied as morality and religious faith. This conclusion results from the very nature of these fields of thought, and is wholly independent of a right decision, in detail, either on the doctrines of religion, or the precepts and lessons of moral science. Assume that Christianity is untrue, and even that faith in a personal God is a dream of superstition, and it may be freely conceded that early prejudice in favour of Theism or Christianity must be a hindrance to sound moral progress, if the idea of such progress be at all conceivable in a scheme of blind fatalism, in a self-developed and godless universe. But on the other hand, if these doctrines are true, they must lie at the root of all just and clear conceptions with regard to the laws and principles of moral science. In this case every step of moral progress must be of two kinds. It must either lead us nearer and nearer to the Fountain of all goodness, the Source of all being, and the Standard of all conceivable perfection, or farther and farther away from that august Presence; till the spirit loses itself in an outer darkness, where the human conscience, amidst countless tokens of the Divine power and wisdom, is wholly blind to them, and seeks to banish the living God from the universe He has made. The question, whether the prevalence of Christian faith in our Universities is a help or hindrance to the pursuit of moral truth, resolves itself plainly into the earlier and deeper inquiry, Is the Christian creed a superstitious fiction or a Divine message? If we assume the former alternative, the conclusion that it is injurious to moral inquiry may be admitted by the most devout

Christian to follow naturally from the postulate which has been assumed. But if the Gospel of Christ be a Divine message, then to affirm that a public acceptance and profession of the Christian faith unfits an university for taking part in moral inquiries with any hope of success, is worse than an intellectual paradox. It is an affront to the Divine Author of the message, and a direct aspersion on His goodness and wisdom. On this view His creatures ask for bread, and He has given them a stone. They ask for food, and He gives a serpent. That message, of which the professed aim and purpose is to aid them in the great work of moral recovery and progress, is pronounced, by this dictum of sceptical philosophy, to be a hindrance and barrier to all progress which really deserves the name.

The objection is presented in another form. No thought can find place in a Christian University, unless it contrives first to reconcile itself to orthodoxy. Such an argument, if we do not assume the falsehood of the religious faith professed, involves a fallacy of the plainest kind. For all deep truth is and must be self-consistent and harmonious. The genuine acceptance of truth of one kind must help, and not hinder, the attainment of all kindred truth. A right faith in God, and a true belief in the mission of the Son of God, unless there be intestine war in the kingdom of truth itself, must be the mainspring and fountainhead of true moral progress. No tree can grow, unless it "reconciles itself" with the root on which all its vitality depends. Once let it be proved that Christianity is a fable and a dream, and it will follow at once that its acceptance and profession, like that of every grosser superstition, must be a clog and hindrance to genuine research and sound philosophy. A mind, weighted with falsehoods in any one direction, is less fitted for the

discernment of truth in all the rest. So far as a superstitious element intrudes into any scheme of doctrine, or code of belief, the influence on scientific progress must be injurious and hurtful. But experience only confirms the view of all sober Christians, that clear discernment of the great laws of moral duty, and the attainment of high degrees of moral excellence, is a natural fruit of the growth of religious faith, and of a hearty acceptance of the great and central truths of the Christian revelation.

Mr Mill, however, carries his advocacy of his principle still further, and ventures to state it in the most extreme form. Even if the doctrines professed, he says, were every one as true as any fact in physical science, and adopted as the result of the most diligent investigation, still the engagement under penalties always to adhere to opinions once professed would debilitate and lame the mind, and unfit it for progress, and still more for assisting the progress of others. Of what value on any subject is the opinion of any man of whom every one knows that by his profession he must hold that opinion?

On this view the first requisite for an efficient teacher in any branch of knowledge is to hold his opinions like a suit of clothes, which he may change at a moment's notice, wearing them to-day, and casting them aside to-morrow. Surely the exact converse is much nearer the truth. Where everything is held movable and uncertain, there may be room for indefinite loquacity, and the loud clamour of conflicting sects and parties, either in religion or philosophy; but teachers and learners must be on the same level of real ignorance, and all genuine science, moral or theological, is still unborn.

When direct penalties have been imposed on the profession of opinions, supposed to be dangerous or heretical,

and they have been treated by religious bigotry as social crimes, the effect has usually been hurtful, not only to the cause of honest inquiry, but of true religion. The same censure is here applied to every case, in which endowments are left for specific objects, and public trusts, for purposes of education, are created or accepted under conditions of a religious kind. The objection assumes that forfeiture of a trust, when a person becomes unable, through some change of views, conscientiously to fulfil its known conditions, is really to be looked upon in the same light, and visits honest conviction with a penalty as a public crime. But such a view fights against the universal laws of Providence, and the very constitution of human life. Opinions on weighty questions of moral duty or religious faith can never be free from secondary consequences, nor exempt from the possibility, either of temporal benefit, or of a call to heroic self-sacrifice. It propounds a condition for impartial inquiry, wholly impossible to be realized, that we shall neither be better nor worse, in wealth, reputation, comfort, ease, or social influence, whatever the result of our inquiries may be. Such a requirement is unreasonable, by whomsoever it may be made. But it is most strangely inconsistent in the lips of a leading champion of the utilitarian theory. For this affirms that moral right and wrong are constituted by the results of actions, and by these alone. On this view the moral rightness of true opinions, and the moral duty of seeking to attain them, depends wholly on the good consequences to which they lead. If the formation of a creed, or the acceptance of a doctrine, be a moral act at all, it must plainly come under the grand maxim which forms the basis of the whole theory. How strange, then, that a champion of utilitarianism, in the outset

of a laboured defence of the system, should begin by making entire immunity from temporal benefit or loss the necessary and inseparable condition of moral progress.

Truth should be sought first and chiefly for its own sake. It is the proper food and aliment of the soul of man. Falsehoods are like poison received into the system, a shame and degradation to him who believes them. The outward benefits, which the attainment of truth may bring with it, ought always to have a very secondary place in the motives that stimulate to research. Such, in contrast to that simpler utilitarian creed, which makes right and wrong depend on external and measurable results alone, is the lesson of sound and true morality. Mysticism is an opposite extreme. It places the essence and distinctive mark of virtue in entire self-abnegation, so that an act is vicious and corrupt, when the agent is influenced at all by the hope of a personal gain or benefit. And Mr Mill begins his defence of utilitarianism by imposing this mysticism, substituted for every religious doctrine, as a kind of new moral test for our Universities, and lays it down for the fundamental law of their constitution, if they are to be really helpful in the progress of sound philosophy and ethical science. Truth, he seems to maintain, cannot be sought sincerely, unless all motives of a temporal kind are entirely excluded from the mind of the student. A teacher's opinions are worthless and have no value, unless he is perfectly free to cast them aside any moment, and still to forfeit no trust, resign no privilege, and suffer no social loss whatever by the change. Utilitarianism, in short, is the only sound and consistent form of moral philosophy. It is the morality of progress, while other schools of thought are only stationary or even retrograde in their character. But

still the first requisite, that a university and its teachers may drink in the rays from this bright orb of genuine science, is a careful and strict exclusion of every motive of an external or utilitarian kind. Mr Mill seems here to carry philosophical inconsistency to its farthest extreme.

The acceptance, by teachers, of a public trust, under weighty and important conditions as to the character and main substance of their teaching, can have no tendency whatever in itself to lame and debilitate the mind. Such conditions are a reasonable and natural pledge for the care and deliberation with which their convictions have been formed, and the social worth and importance of scientific, moral, or religious truth. Who can be expected to bequeath funds, merely that some one or other may teach something or other, he knows not what, to future generations? Chairs would never have been founded for teaching a science of astronomy, if the sky had neither fixed stars, nor planets of settled orbit, and supplied no materials but meteors of momentary brilliance, that shoot into light for a moment, and as suddenly disappear.

These censures of Mr Mill on our English Universities for including in their original constitution a definite acceptance of Christian faith and doctrine suggest an inquiry of high importance. Is it the test of perfection, in such an institution, merely to set a number of persons to teach, with no pledge and assurance at all as to the general character of their teaching, and with the sole condition that they claim for themselves to be able and vigorous thinkers, or that this claim is made by a circle of admirers on their behalf? Is it wise and right to set aside all faith in God, Christ, and immortality, as mere superfluities in higher education, and to replace them by faith in some undefined aristocracy of genius,

and in the superior wisdom of the latest novelties in science, morality, and religion, compared with all the thinkers and students of earlier days? It is possible to abrogate all religious tests, and to introduce others in their stead, far inferior in their worth, and practically still more stringent and exclusive. The passive acceptance of the latest philosophical novelty, and of some vague theories of human perfectibility and cosmical development, may then be erected into the main requisite for the occupation of trusts, which were founded for a very different and far nobler object by the faith and piety of Christian men.

Again, have weakness and orthodoxy, strength and heterodoxy, any natural connection? So Mr Mill appears to assume. The fault he condemns is that of teachers, who prefer that their students should be weak, but orthodox, rather than strong with freedom of thought. Now it is very natural and lawful to insist on the plain truth, that a claim to the right faith cannot in itself prove its real possession. The name, orthodoxy, it is evident, may often have been widely severed from the reality, and many opinions may have passed current under the title in particular times or places, which imply mental weakness, because the claim has no basis in truth, and is due to personal self-conceit, or blind trust in human authority alone. Common sense will teach us that a confident denunciation of the supposed errors or heresies of others is no pledge that we ourselves are basking in the clear sunlight of perfect truth. But Mr Mill has debarred himself from the use of this distinction and contrast, however vital and important. To simplify his indictment, he is content to assume, for the sake of his argument, that what calls itself orthodoxy has a

just right to the name, and that its doctrines are all "as true as any fact in physical science." He supposes further that they have not been blindly taken on trust, but received after careful inquiry, and with intelligent conviction. So the maxim reduces itself to a paradox of this startling kind, that the acceptance of vital and important truths on religious subjects disqualifies and unfits for moral progress, as soon as any outward advantage is linked with their reception, and that the adoption of falsehoods in their place, if zealously and earnestly received, is a better pledge for ability to assist in the great work of education. Truth in religion, it would seem, is naturally allied with moral and intellectual weakness, while error has some strange affinity with moral progress and intellectual strength. The mind is lamed and debilitated, if it arrives at the most important truths after due inquiry and with full conviction, the moment any public institution gives them a preference over the opposite falsehoods as qualifications for the teachers whom it employs, or any public funds are devoted to their diffusion and propagation. And again, right and wrong have no existence in themselves; they are created by the benefit or loss which flows from any kind of action, and depend on this alone. But still, to link the reception of any opinions, by law, with a certain measure of external privilege, poisons free inquiry at its fountain-head; because, in the formation of opinions, it is a fundamental condition of moral progress, that no social consequences whatever shall be attached to a right or wrong judgment. In other words, the good consequences of actions are what constitute them morally right actions, but the society which gives any preference to the teaching of truths over that of the opposite falsehoods, and links

them with the least social gain, renders moral progress impossible, since entire freedom from the temptation of associating external advantage with one opinion above another is the first condition of honest research after moral truth.

The true relation between religious faith and freedom of thought is very different. It is only when man ceases to look on himself as a mere animal, and recognizes that spiritual nature, which makes him capable of worship and reverence to an unseen Creator, that the moral elements of his being can obtain their just and full development. He needs to blossom upwards towards the light. And the light which quickens his spiritual life can proceed only from above.

> He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
> And all are slaves beside.

That freedom of thought, which consists in turning resolutely away from the Divine presence, and pronouncing all religious faith to be the dream of ignorant superstition, will prove itself, soon or late, to be slavery disguised. The lower elements of man's nature will prevail over the higher, the grosser over the purer, when these have been severed from the secret source and fountain on which they depend. Sensuality, disguised at first under philosophical theories, will make destructive inroads on the domain of genuine morality; and the progress which refuses any alliance with Divine revelation and heavenly truth, will swiftly land its disciples in a doctrine of blind, dark, and gloomy fatalism. Instead of the liberty of Christian holiness, and triumphant faith in immortality, their mental home will be "a land of darkness and the shadow of death, and where the light itself is darkness."

LECTURE VIII.

MR MILL'S PROOF OF UTILITARIANISM.

Mr Mill begins his attempt to establish and confirm the Utilitarian view of morals by remarking that, in the ordinary and popular meaning of the term, proof is impossible. "Questions of ultimate ends are not amenable to direct proof. Whatever can be proved to be good must be so by being shown to be a means to something admitted to be good without proof...If, then, it is asserted that there is a comprehensive formula, including all things which are in themselves good, and that whatever else is a good is not so as an end but as a mean, the formula may be accepted or rejected, but is not a subject of what is commonly understood by proof." Still, he remarks, "the subject is within the cognizance of the rational faculty, and neither does that faculty deal with it solely in the way of intuition. Considerations may be presented, capable of determining the intellect either to give or withhold its assent to the doctrine; and this is equivalent to proof."

These remarks, I believe, are substantially true. But they suggest a natural question, whether there can be any kind of proof, which belongs neither to demonstration from principles first assumed, nor to intuition of the first principles themselves. The true answer seems to be that intuition is not so simple and spontaneous a process as is

often supposed. The mind may need culture and training, to see first principles clearly, even when they are not inferences from more fundamental truths. The self-evidence of which they are the proper subject may be for exact thought and carefully prepared faculties alone. Without this preparation, leading to clear definition and distinct mental vision, these principles are no less liable to doubt and ambiguity than the consequences which flow from them when once received. The statement, then, seems to need this correction, that the rational faculty in these cases deals with the subject, not in the way of demonstration, nor of spontaneous and immediate intuition, but of an intuition, for which careful thought, definition, and meditation must prepare the way.

In the fourth chapter Mr Mill proceeds to give the proof of the Utilitarian theory, so far as he conceives proof to be possible, in these words:

"Questions about ends are questions what things are desirable. The Utilitarian doctrine is that happiness is desirable, and the only thing desirable, as an end; all other things being only desirable as means to that end. What ought to be required of this doctrine, to make good its claim to be believed?"

"The only proof capable of being given that an object is visible is that people actually see it. The only proof that a sound is audible is that people hear it; and so of the other sources of our experience. In like manner, the sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable is that people do actually desire it. If the end which the Utilitarian doctrine proposes were not, in theory and in practice, acknowledged to be an end, nothing could ever convince a person that it was so. No reason can be given why the general happiness is

desirable, except that each person, so far as he believes it to be attainable, desires his own happiness. This however being a fact, we have not only all the proof which the case admits of, but all which it is possible to require, that happiness is a good; that each person's happiness is a good to that person, and the general happiness, therefore, a good to the aggregate of persons. Happiness has made out its title as *one* of the ends of conduct and consequently one of the criteria of morality."

But the doctrine requires, it may be said, not only that people should desire happiness, but never desire anything else; while the desire of virtue, though not as universal, is as authentic a fact as the desire of happiness, and still is distinguished from it. To this Mr Mill replies as follows:

"But does the Utilitarian doctrine deny that people desire virtue, or maintain that virtue is not a thing to be desired? The very reverse. It maintains not only that virtue is to be desired, but that it is to be desired disinterestedly, for itself. However such moralists may believe that actions and dispositions are only virtuous because they promote another end than virtue, yet this being granted, and it having been decided what is virtuous, they not only place virtue at the very head of things which are good as means to the ultimate end, but they recognize the possibility of its being, to the individual, a good in itself, without looking to any end beyond it; and hold that the mind is not in a right state, not in the state most conducive to the general happiness, unless it does love virtue as a thing desirable in itself, even although in the individual instance it should not produce those other desirable consequences which it tends to produce, and on account of which it is held to be virtue.

This is not in the slightest degree a departure from the happiness principle. The ingredients of happiness are very various, and each of them is desirable in itself, and not merely when considered as swelling an aggregate. Virtue, according to the doctrine, is not naturally and originally part of the end, but it is capable of becoming so; and in those who love it disinterestedly it has become so, and is desired and cherished not as a means but as a part of their happiness."

To see clearly the points at issue in this controversy, we must refer to first principles, or the fundamental conceptions of moral agency, once more. All right action may be viewed in three distinct, closely related aspects, its source or fountain, its course, progress, and method, and its later issues. Hence arise three fundamental ideas, of Virtue, Duty, and Fruitfulness or Utility. Right action, considered as Virtue, implies a right, sound, and healthy condition of the moral agent, the source of the action. When viewed as Duty, it implies and requires conformity to fixed and settled conditions of Divine or human law, and to the voice of conscience within. When viewed in reference to its consequences, or the issue to which it leads, it involves some attendant conception of a personal or social benefit secured, or the fulfilment of some part of a Divine plan of providence, which has for its wider aim the good of the intelligent and moral universe. A just theory of Moral Science requires all these aspects of right action to be duly recognized, and seen alike in their distinctness and their mutual harmony. None of them can be overlooked, or merged in the others, without resulting in a maimed, one-sided, and imperfect view of the whole subject.

The first and main defect of a rigid Utilitarianism is

that it dwells, almost exclusively on the third aspect of moral action alone. The place it assigns to the others is quite secondary and dependent. But by this partiality it cuts the ground from under its feet, and imperils the very existence of a science of morals. If actions have no moral character at all in themselves, but only by an experimental and observed connection with certain benefits or evils, to which they are seen actually to lead, then they stand on the same footing with mere accidents, in which a moral character is wholly absent. The result, on this view of their nature, must be a certain amount of physical change, but nothing more. The prolific moral virtue is gone. A kind action, when divorced from all perception of kind and benevolent feeling in the agent, can have no power to awaken gratitude, and call forth kind action in return. It becomes a source of pleasure, only like that of the showers of spring or the bright sunshine, when faith in Providence is lost, and the course of nature is ascribed to mere chance or blind fatality alone.

But this main defect of the system is increased by another of a secondary kind, but also of no slight practical moment. For Utilitarianism, by the natural force of the term, suggests a different conception from Eudaimonism, or the principle which bases morals on the pursuit of happiness, when the latter assumes its purest form. Philosophers, by artificial definitions, can seldom succeed in stripping words of their familiar and habitual associations. Now the general law of thought, in most languages, is that things are of use, and of use to persons. Objects are useful, when they are means, employed by one who is higher than the means he employs, and for some end which rises in dignity above them. Whenever an action is said to be useful, both the agent and the action are looked upon as

subordinated to some further and higher purpose. Thus a tool is useful to a skilled workman, or food is useful to satisfy the hunger of a starving man.

Now when virtue is based wholly on utility, and happiness is also reduced into a mere summation of successive and momentary pleasures, a plain consequence follows. Virtue is made the handmaid, subordinate in dignity and honour to pleasures of every kind, being only another name for those actions and modes of thought, which are found by experience to avail most in the production of pleasure. The picture drawn by the old Epicurean philosopher, quoted by Cicero, is thus completely verified. Pleasure sits as a queen on her royal throne, and the Virtues, her docile handmaidens, are grouped in homage around her feet. But if the highest and noblest kind of pleasure ranks above virtue, as being its object and aim, the lower kinds rank far beneath it. The phrase, utility, then, when adopted for the main definition of right action, distorts and inverts the true proportion of things. It tends to foster a habit of thought, in which health of mind, virtue, holiness, and the noblest emotions of the redeemed and purified spirit of man, are looked upon as secondary and subordinate, when compared with bodily comfort, ease, and pleasure.

But waiving this objection, let us examine Mr Mill's proof as one of Eudaimonism, or the doctrine that happiness is the end, and the sole end, of all right action. It is very simple, and if the controversy of ages can be settled in this way, we are led to wonder how it could ever have arisen. The proof that an object is visible is that people actually see it, or that a sound is audible, that people hear it. So the proof that happiness is desirable is that people actually desire it. This is a fact proved by ex-

perience. Each person desires his own happiness. Therefore each person's happiness is the thing desirable for himself, and the general happiness is desirable, or the chief good, to the aggregate of all persons.

But here, first, there is an evident fallacy. The desired and the desirable are not the same. Visible things are what can be seen, audible sounds what can be heard. But things desirable mean evidently, not what can be or are desired, but such as it is either right or wise to desire. The interval, strangely overlooked in this proof of the first ground of morals, is nothing less than that wide contrast and gulf between the actual and the ideal, what is and what ought to be, on which the very conception of morality depends. Professor Grote has noticed this grand defect in the argument with his usual acumen and sagacity. "Surely Mr Mill cannot mean," he says, "that the problem of the *summum bonum* is solved by laying down, as a fact of observation, that what men really desire is what is pleasant to them...If by the desirable we mean the *ideally desirable*, that which is good for man, or makes his welfare, it is certainly no fact of observation that man desires this, for he constantly does not do so. But it is not in this manner that any moral theory is to be proved, so far as it is capable of proof."

That happiness, in the utilitarian sense of the word, is actually desired, is not, as Mr Mill assumes, a fact proved by wide experience. It is rather a pure verbal definition. For the term, in Bentham's theories, simply denotes the sum total of pleasures, or things actually desired, diminished by the attendant pains, or the sensations disliked and avoided. But such a verbal definition can never solve the deep and hard problems of ethical science. The question must at once arise,—Cannot men be pleased

amiss? Are there no "vain deluding joys," no pleasures which have their source in ignorance and folly, and their issue in bitter disappointment? Are there here no apples of Sodom, which attract the eye, but prove only, on experience of their character and effects, to be bitter ashes? Moral Science would be almost a superfluous study, except for the sad fact, proved by long and oft-repeated experience, that men may be pleased with the idlest follies, or even with the free indulgence of base and hateful passions. A theory of morals, which excludes every attempt to discern the rightness and wrongness of pleasures, and takes for its basis and mainspring the mere sensation of being pleased, it matters not why or how, is like a scheme for building a solid and stately pyramid upon loose and floating quicksands.

There is another fault, no less vital, in the foundation Mr Mill has here laid for the utilitarian theory. A transition is stealthily made from personal to collective or general happiness, but in such a way as to vitiate the whole argument. If the desirable for each one is his own happiness, and this is either the definition of the term, or else a fact of universal experience, then another's happiness, as such, can be the desirable for no one. And thus that collective well-being is the true *summum bonum*, instead of being established, will rather be disproved. In replacing individual or personal pleasure by a far wider conception, the general or collective welfare of mankind, we pass from a mere verbal definition of the desirable, or the experience of what actually is desired, to an ideal of what we ought to aim at, what it is humane, or noble, or godlike, to desire. And this is plainly a distinct and far higher question.

Again, Mr Mill admits and affirms that "the mind is

not in a right state, unless it loves virtue as a thing desirable in itself." But from this admission it results at once that happiness is not the sole end of all right action. If it were so in some conceivable world, yet in a world where this admission is true the case must be different. There is owned to be another end rightly pursued for its own sake, as well as happiness. Mr Mill seeks here to escape from the low marshes of a pure and naked utilitarianism, and to rise into higher ground. But he can succeed only by a kind of logical suicide. The mind, on this view, is only in a right state, when it forgets the creed of utility, and fancies something to be desirable for its own sake, which a more profound philosophy would teach to be properly desirable only for certain good and pleasant results to which it leads. The question of Professor Grote is here appropriate and forcible,—"Is not this equivalent to saying that, however true utilitarianism may be, it is not well that men should believe in it, and act upon it? Is it a sort of arcanum, on which the initiated may act, while the ordinary world will best be left to the old delusion of regard to, and value for, virtue?"

The paradox, indeed, grows directly out of the first principle of Bentham's more strict and rigid theory. His doctrine is that the bare fact or existence of a pleasure, wholly irrespective of its character, makes it one coequal factor or element in a sum of pure arithmetic, on the right computation of which all true morality depends, and that virtue is defined by the greatest balance and excess of pleasures over pains, when this summation has been properly made. "In this matter," he says, "we want no refinement, no metaphysics. It is not necessary to consult Plato or Aristotle. Pain and pleasure are what every one feels to be such, the peasant and the prince, the unlearned

as well as the philosopher." Thus all pleasures of whatever kind, if only felt at the moment to be pleasing, must enter equally and on the same level into the calculation. And yet they are to enter most unequally, and some of them are right and others wrong, because it is a more useful state of mind to be pleased with virtuous than with vicious actions. For the process of calculation, each moment of pleasant or painful sensation has to be viewed as a separate whole, and there is to be a rigid exclusion of every thought of a deeper kind, beyond the simple fact that we are either pleased or pained. But experience and reason, to say nothing of religious faith, throw us back continually from phenomena to laws, from effects to causes, from the simple fact of being pleased or displeased to the inquiry whether the pleasure be wise or foolish, good or evil, and flows from a sweet or bitter fountain in the heart.

Mr Mill further explains his theory, and seeks to justify and confirm it, by what he deems a parallel case. "What shall we say," he asks, "of the love of money? There is nothing originally more desirable about money than any heap of glittering pebbles. Its worth is solely that of the things it will buy, or desires for other things, which it is a means of gratifying. Yet the love of money is not only one of the strongest moving forces of human life, but in many cases money is desired in and for itself. The desire to possess it is often stronger than the desire to use it, and goes on increasing, when all the desires for ends to be compassed by it are falling off. It may then be said truly that money is desired, not for the sake of an end, but as a part of the end. From being a means to happiness, it has come to be a principal ingredient in the conception of happiness. The same may be

said of a majority of the great objects of human life; power for example, or force, except that to these there is a certain amount of immediate pleasure attached, which has the semblance of being naturally inherent in them. In these cases the means have become a part of the end, and a more important part than any of the things which they are means to. What we once desired as an instrument for attaining happiness has come to be desired for its own sake. In being desired for its own sake, it is however desired as a part of happiness. Virtue, according to the utilitarian conception, is a good of this description."

It is very strange to lay such stress on an argument, which is really a decisive refutation of the doctrine it is meant to prove. Let us allow, in these two cases, their close resemblance, so far as we deal with psychology and mental experience alone. Money, first desired for the sake of what it can procure, may in course of time be coveted for its own sake, when the disposition to make use of it is wholly gone. Such avarice may become one of the strongest and most deep-rooted habits of the mind. The miser may then gloat in secret over hoards of unused, and to him useless treasure. In the same way, according to Mr Mill's explanation, virtue, first desired for the sake of the outward pleasures it buys, may come to be desired for its own sake. But what shall we say of the moral features in the two cases? Is there resemblance or contrast? No mind, he says, is in a right state, which does not thus desire virtue for its own sake. Is it, then, a right state of mind in the miser to covet the gold for its own sake, which he never cares to spend, and even dreads the thought of spending? Does the Psalmist intend to describe a state of wisdom or folly, when he says of the worldly man, "He heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather

them"? Do we not feel at once that this love of money, as money, when wholly divorced from the wish to use it, is a base and mischievous superstition? In its extreme form is it not one of the worst delusions, which satirists, both heathen and Christian, have assailed with keenest ridicule, and against which divines and moralists have inveighed in the severest terms of censure and indignation? But if the utilitarian creed be correct, why should not the acquired love of Virtue for its own sake, however conceivable as a fact, be equally worthy of blame, as an unphilosophical, delusive, and mischievous folly? If the process be alike in both cases, and they depend on a common principle, with no moral or fundamental difference, we must either exalt avarice into a sign of moral progress, or else denounce the love of Virtue, for its own sake, as a descent from the heights of calm and wise philosophy into a region of error and sentimental dreams.

But if the two cases are a moral contrast, wide apart, on what does the contrast depend? On the principles of utilitarian philosophy, pure and simple, as expounded in Bentham's works, it admits of no explanation. The mental process may be clearly stated, and the outward resemblance be real and important. But the inference will be that the disinterested love of virtue, and the passion of avarice, in the eyes of enlightened philosophy, are two kindred follies, though one may repel us with the ugly features of a fiend, and the other have all the seeming attractiveness and beauty of an angel of light.

The supposed proof of the utilitarian ground of all morality is carried further, and stated in another form, at the close of the chapter, in these words:

"It is by associating the doing right with pleasure, or the doing wrong with pain, or by eliciting and bringing

home to the person's experience the pleasure naturally involved in the one, or the pain in the other, that it is possible to call forth that will to be virtuous, which, when confirmed, acts without any thought either of pleasure or pain. Will is the child of desire, and passes out of the dominion of its parent, only to come under that of habit. That which is the result of habit affords no presumption of being intrinsically good, and there would be no reason for wishing that the purpose of virtue should become independent of pleasure and pain, were it not that the influence of the pleasurable and painful associations which prompt to virtue is not sufficiently to be depended upon for unerring constancy of action, until it has acquired the support of habit. Both in habit and in conduct, habit is the only thing which imparts certainty, and it is because of the importance to others of being able to rely absolutely on one's feelings and conduct, and to oneself of being able to rely on one's own, that the will to do right ought to be cultivated into this habit and independence. In other words, this state of the will is a means to good, not intrinsically a good; and does not contradict the doctrine that nothing is a good to human beings, but in so far as it is either itself pleasurable, or a means of attaining pleasure, or averting pain. But if this doctrine be true, the principle of utility is proved."

It is not easy, in this passage, to see the exact drift of the argument, or what form of the doctrine of utility Mr Mill endeavours to prove, and thinks that he has proved. That happiness, in the popular sense, denotes the sum of all things conceived as desirable or pleasant, so far as these are attainable, and disturbed as little as possible, by things unpleasant or painful, is rather a truism or verbal definition, than the badge of any special

school in morals. The doctrine of utility, unless words are to be warped from their natural sense, means that actions have no inherent goodness or badness, for which it is right and just to be pleased or displeased with them, but are morally right or wrong because of the excess of pleasure or pain in the results to which they lead. It is an abuse of terms to include in our view a pleasure or delight inherent in the action itself, when felt to be good and right, and still to affirm that actions are good, purely and exclusively, because of their usefulness, or the pleasant results that follow. How, then, can this doctrine be reconciled with a theory which admits the rightness and excellence of disinterested virtue? The steps of transition are these. First, the pleasures by which moral virtue and vice are defined are conceived as being those outward or later consequences alone, which are capable of being foreseen by resemblance to past actions of which there has already been experience. In this way certain classes of action, by a kind of first approximation, may be reckoned good or evil. Next, since this good or evil character depends on collective, not on personal pleasure, men need to have their wills trained, so as to take delight in doing virtuous acts, and thus to form the habit of virtue. Thirdly, this habit may be so formed, by proper culture, as that men come to delight in acts conceived to be good and virtuous, with no actual reference in their thoughts to the pleasant consequences likely to flow from them, either to themselves or others. It is even desirable that this habit of forgetfulness should be formed, because it is a more powerful and steady principle of action than any series of calculations of probable results could be. And this neglect of consequences in the growth of virtuous habits is a right state of mind, because it

leads to good consequences which could hardly be expected, if doing right depended, on each occasion, on a momentary impulse of kindness alone. The pleasure of doing right, in this case becomes one part of human happiness, and is rightly included in the utilitarian process of calculation.

This view, when we look into it closely, will be found to involve two fundamental contradictions. In the first stage of thought the sequent pleasures and pains are treated as all-important, so that the subjective feelings of the agent may be entirely neglected, and actions classed as good or evil, better or worse, by a due consideration of the benefit or injury they will lead to, or may be expected to lead to, in the case of society at large. Not only these sequent pleasures and pains are viewed as fixed, certain, and measurable, but it is made a duty to mould the personal feelings into habitual agreement with the conclusions to which a due and correct estimate of them must lead. But when the last stage of the process is reached, we are then taught that these pleasures of habitual virtue are one main part of the happiness which is the basis of the whole theory. So that men are to be trained to be pleased with what is right, but the definition of right is to be drawn from the corrected sum total of sequent and inherent pleasures, including these results of highly important previous training. Virtue is thus made, by a kind of paradox, to sit on its own knees, and to be a child of those pleasures, of which one part, and not the least important, is the pleasure of doing what is right for its own sake.

And here is a second contradiction, no less vital than the first, and fatal to the argument. The definition of virtuous actions, by the doctrine of utility, is the overplus

or excess of pleasures in the results to which they lead. Yet Mr Mill says that it is quite consistent with this doctrine, to hold that men may learn by habit to be pleased with doing right, without any thought of consequences, and that it is highly useful that such a state of mind should be attained. But this is really to grasp at a shadow, and lose the substance. If the essence of virtue, in the act, consists in its pleasurable results, then the essence of habitual virtue, in the agent, must consist in the constant and intelligent aim at such results; and wherever this aim is wanting, there can be no virtue, but a shadowy counterfeit alone. To do acts which are followed by pleasant and good results is not virtuous, when the connection is casual, not moral, and there was no wish, aim, or purpose that these results should follow. The habits, then, described by Mr Mill, if we accept his first principle, are no more to be called virtuous than the passion of the miser, when he learns to prize money for itself, and has forgotten to value it for its uses alone. Once admit the exclusive truth and sufficiency of the utilitarian creed, and the formation of such habits must involve the decay and extinction of that which alone deserves the name of virtue. It will substitute in its place the empire of some morally worthless routine of action, like rivers that lose themselves in desert sands, and wholly disappear.

On the other hand, if actions are not good merely because of their consequences, but good consequences follow on them because they are good and right in themselves, as children that resemble their parents, and are known by the likeness, then the process Mr Mill describes and commends may be a real moral ascent and upward progress. Men may then become more virtuous, when

they learn to think less of those outward results, which alone they can measure or anticipate from their limited experience of the past, and see more and more, in all right action, something desirable, mainly and in the first place, for its own sake, and only in the second place for those outward results which are reasonably expected to follow, which bear the impress of its character, and reflect its image. The mind may begin by dwelling first in thought on these rivulets. But it rises in moral dignity, when it turns from these to the fountain-head, out of which they flow. It thus becomes virtuous, in the best and highest sense, when it sees its chief good in the attainment of moral excellence as man's noblest possession, and aims directly and earnestly at the fulfilment of that Divine precept of the Gospel,—"Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect."

LECTURE IX.

THE TRUE DEFINITION OF UTILITARIANISM.

The supposed proof of Utilitarianism, in Mr Mill's fourth chapter, has three great defects. It confounds the actually desired with the desirable, or the proper and reasonable object of human desire, a contrast which lies at the root of all theoretical and practical morality. It mistakes a verbal definition of happiness for a laborious product and conclusion of human experience. And it strives to reconcile with the utilitarian principle a doctrine to which it forms an essential contrast; that is, the merit and excellence of disinterested virtue, when noble acts are done for their own sake, or by force of habit, without any regard whatever to the pleasurable consequences that may usually follow.

The definition of the doctrine, "what utilitarianism is," in the second chapter, scarcely answers to its title. It is merely a reply to objections, very opposite in character, which have been often urged against it, and as Mr Mill conceives, without reason, from an imperfect knowledge of the theory opposed. He seems to imagine that they are all aimed, and some of them with signal inconsistency, against the modified theory which he defends. But in reality they apply to distinct, and by no means harmonious varieties of the same general doctrine. And the defence is carried on by renouncing the main features of the Deon-

tology, and adopting an eclectic theory, called by Professor Grote, Neo-Utilitarianism, but to which it may be doubted whether the title, Utilitarianism, in any true and proper sense belongs. It consists mainly in these statements or admissions; that Epicureanism is faulty and imperfect, and needs the introduction of Stoic and Christian elements; that pleasures differ in quality no less than quantity, and are of a lower and a higher kind; that the happiness, which is the proper standard of right action, is not selfish or personal, but the general and collective welfare of mankind; that, on the hypothesis of the Divine benevolence, this ethical theory is not godless, but more profoundly religious than any other; and that, instead of resting on new calculations to be made from hour to hour, it properly includes and utilizes all the secondary axioms of morals, current in society, which only embody and condense the lessons of experience through long ages of mankind.

Mr Mill's definition is in these words. "The creed which accepts as the foundation of Morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the prevention of pleasure... Supplementary explanations do not affect the theory of life, on which this theory of morality is grounded, that pleasure, and freedom from pain, are the only things desirable as ends; and that all desirable things are desirable, either for the pleasure inherent in themselves, or as means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain."

Here the three terms, Utility, Pleasure, Happiness, in their common relation to the theory of morals, are

assumed to be equivalent, or various modes of expressing one and the same principle. But this I believe to be an error, tending to mental confusion. The morality of consequences, which might be conveniently styled, Apobatic Morality, has three varieties, distinct, though nearly allied, as Utility, Pleasure, or Happiness, is made the keynote or watch-word of the system. The first gives birth to Utilitarianism proper, of which Bentham is perhaps the most exact representative. The second leads to Hedonics, or the old Epicureanism, and its modern varieties. The third is Eudaimonics, the doctrine of Aristotle, at least in one part of his *Ethics*, and which only needs due explanation and limitation, to become one main element in a true and comprehensive theory of moral feeling and action.

The experience of Bentham himself, with regard to the impression made by the leading phrase he assumed, is very instructive. For many years he continued to use the word, utility, as the definition of his main theory. But he found afterwards, as we are told in the Deontology, that the effect, even on some persons of highly educated mind, was to create a prejudice wholly unfounded, as if his doctrine excluded pleasure and enjoyment, and thought of definite uses alone. From that time he almost discontinued the phrase, utility, and replaced it by Dr Priestley's formula, "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." Even this, at a still later period, seemed to him ambiguous, and open to misconstruction, as if a minority were to be overlooked, and respect paid to the welfare of the major part alone. He then introduced finally, as the defining phrase of his system, "the greatest happiness on the whole."

Let us now enter on the double inquiry, what is the

proper and distinctive meaning of Utilitarianism in morals, and how far the modified scheme of Mr Mill's treatise has a just claim to the title which he still chooses to retain.

No action can be morally good and right which is wholly aimless. And the aim, in every act of a reasonable moral agent, must be the attainment of some end, conceived, either rightly or wrongly, to be good and desirable by him who seeks to attain it. Every theory of morals must include a reference to consequences to this extent. Exclude wholly the notion of aiming at something that is good in some sense or other, and pleases in some way or other, and the conception of reasonable action disappears. Apobatic Morality, then, in contrast to rival systems, cannot be defined by including merely some reference to results, desired or expected to follow, in its estimate of right and wrong action. Its essence is the denial of any moral contrast in the actions themselves, apart from actual experience, in similar cases, of pleasant or painful results that have followed, and may thus be expected under like conditions. Its main feature is to transfer our thoughts from the inward character of the will, aim, or desire, in the agent himself, from the state of the heart, or moral disposition, and to fasten them on the outward benefits or injuries, to which the action may lead, in those who are the patients or objects of the activity, and on which alone its rightness or wrongness is supposed to depend.

The doctrine, in proper and genuine Utilitarianism, must take this form, that utility is the sole parent, test, and standard of all virtue. Actions are good and right, because they are useful. They are wrong, because they are useless or mischievous. And here we are bound to take the word, useful, as Bentham enjoins in the case

of pleasure, in its popular and usual sense. The statement that actions are useful has not the same meaning as to say that they are pleasant, or that they are kind and benevolent. Each phrase conveys a different idea. In the first case, our thoughts are fixed on some outward results, more lasting than momentary sensations of pleasure, whether of the agent, or the objects of his action. In the second, they rest on the sensations of delight and pleasure, usually transient, which either accompany the action, as one inherent element, or follow after. In the third, our thoughts are turned to the inward feelings and motives of the benevolent person. And again, when happiness is taken for the watch-word, instead of transient, momentary pleasure, we think rather of those settled sources of comfort and felicity, which depend in part on acquired habits of body and mind, but also on the arrangements of providence, and all the outward and variable conditions of human life.

Utilitarianism, when the term retains its proper sense, has one main defect, which it shares with the other forms of Apobatic Morals. It dwells on the third aspect of moral action, the results to which it leads, to the exclusion of two others, equally essential, and more fundamental, the fountain from which it must proceed, and the channel through which it must flow. There is a standard of Divine perfection and essential right, which must go before. There is a standard of conscience, and internal subjective harmony with the condition and powers of the moral agent, which must accompany and guide the action; and there is a standard of providential guidance, by which the action, in its results, is carried into and absorbed in, a grand, mysterious scheme of the destinies of the universe. And it is the fault of the morality of

consequences, in all its varieties, that it dwells on the last of these, and usually on a very limited view of it, to the exclusion of the others, which are equally essential to a just and comprehensive view of the whole subject.

But besides this defect, common to the three varieties of the main doctrine, Utilitarianism has two others peculiar to itself. And first, it excludes from our view the pleasure inherent in right and healthy activity, or the direct enjoyment of the moral agent in the action itself. We do not say that exercise is useful, because it is pleasant to a child to walk or to run, or that a landscape is useful, because there is a delight to the eyes in gazing on a lovely prospect, or that a kind action is useful, because a benevolent mind has keen delight in relieving distress, and exercising kindness. When utility is assumed for the master principle of all morality, one of two alternatives must be chosen. We must either omit and set aside from our theory all respect to the pleasure which inheres in every kind of right and healthy activity, the free, spontaneous life of the soul, or else include it by a plain abuse of terms; which will infallibly lead to confusion of thought, awakening natural prejudice in opponents, who assume words to be used in their proper sense; and to artificial and laboured defences, when phrases are expounded in an esoteric sense, to save the credit of the system when assailed, and rebound to their natural meaning, as soon as the pressure is removed.

In the next place, the consequences to which the term utility properly applies are extraneous and external, not intrinsic, essential, and inherent. They mean usually those which are induced by some foreign cause, or the conspiring result of several such causes, and not the simple product of the action, taken alone. An apple-tree

or a vine is fruitful, because of the apples or grapes which are found on its branches, the produce of its life, the fruit it directly yields. It is useful, because these fruits may be afterward applied to some beneficial purpose by the purchaser or the owner. The apples may be manufactured into cider, or used for desserts, and the grapes be used as raisins, or turned into wine. An estate is beautiful because of its trees and flowers, its hills and valleys, and all that is adapted to please the eye and charm the senses of the beholder. It is useful, because of the rent it provides for its owner, or the produce which it yields for the markets of the land.

Again, utility, from the natural force of the term, views the action and the agent as alike subordinate to the outward results that follow. A thing is used, passively, by some power or person, higher than itself. The clay is useful in the hands of the potter, the gold in the hands of the goldsmith, the simples and drugs of the apothecary, when applied under the instructions of a skilled physician. And when we extend the term from things to persons, this idea of subordination still remains. Thus a clerk is useful in a house of business, a servant in a domestic household, and policemen in a time of a public procession or festivity. We do not usually apply the term to the philanthropist, the man of science, the statesman, the general of an army, or the princes and rulers of a powerful state. And when we speak of one person as using another for some object of his own, there is commonly implied some degree of moral anomaly and degradation. Or again, we may speak of the eloquence of a statesman as a gift very useful to him in his office; but we should shock the general conscience, if we were to speak of honesty and

uprightness as a very useful quality to the rulers of the land.

These clear facts with regard to the natural and proper sense of the term, useful, explain, and partly justify, the first objection to which Mr Mili alludes, and which he dismisses with great contempt. He speaks of the "ignorant blunder" of supposing that those who stand up for utility as the test of right and wrong use the term "in that restricted and colloquial sense, in which utility is opposed to pleasure." Philosophers, however, cannot break down the old landmarks of human speech, and wholly change the significance of words, which are in constant and familiar use, by arbitrary and esoteric changes of their meaning. It is not in loose talk alone, but in strictness of speech, and by the laws of etymology, which link it with a large class of kindred words, and which prevail alike in most languages, that utility is distinguished from pleasure, and stands to it in partial opposition. The words of Horace

Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci,

show how marked and definite the antithesis was felt to be, long ages ago. Hedonics, or the theory which enthrones pleasure, and Utilitarianism, the doctrine which bases the right wholly on the useful, may be variously combined, and overlap each other. But alike in conception and in phrase they are naturally distinct. Pleasure relates directly to the present, utility to an expected future. One deals more with emotion and feeling, the other with calculation. One has its source and spring in present instinct and appetite, the other includes a wider range of collateral and external results, that may form the subject of foresight and prudential calculation. The

two complaints, then, are not inconsistent, as Mr Mill conceives, when referred to their proper and respective objects. A theory of morals, based wholly on the consideration of what is pleasant, may be "too practically voluptuous," and one which rests strictly and solely on utility, may be censured, with equal truth and entire consistency, as "impracticably dry."

The scheme of Bentham, though he uses all the three phrases in turn, is still predominantly utilitarian. His pleasures enter only as the data in a problem of calculation. His main object is "to find the processes of a moral arithmetic by which uniform results may be arrived at." A pleasure, as a pleasure, is a momentary and transient thing. It exists only in the moment of enjoyment. But the pleasures of Bentham's theory are the counters in a vast sum of addition. The leading inquiry in his whole system is not, Does an action please? but to what results does it lead, to what future uses can it be applied? And against such a scheme of morals, which attempts in theory to resolve the morality of all actions into the solution of so many sums of addition, the complaint that it is hard, cold, mechanical, and impracticably dry, seems to apply with perfect truth.

Mr Mill struggles to escape from these defects of the master whom he admires, but whose incomplete thinking and limited experience he is quite willing to allow. His theory of morals is more elastic and comprehensive. But can it with truth be styled utilitarian? In reality he reverses and sets aside all those three features, on which the suitableness of the name depends.

And first, the delight which inheres in actions themselves is never included, when we speak of them as useful. It is pleasant to see, to hear, to converse, to exercise the

various gifts of a healthy body and a well instructed mind. But we do not refer to this pleasure at all, when such and such actions are pronounced useful. The term relates to later consequences alone. Those who desire virtue for its own sake, Mr Mill observes, "desire it either because the consciousness of it is a pleasure, or because the consciousness of being without it is a pain, or for both reasons united." To such pleasure, however, involved in right action itself as approved by the conscience, the name of utility does not apply. It belongs only to those outward and secondary results of a desirable and pleasant nature, which usually follow, soon or late, on upright and virtuous conduct. In his view of the true principles of morals, Mr Mill includes direct and inherent, no less than sequent pleasures, and thereby departs from the correct and proper sense of the phrase, that virtue depends on utility alone.

Again, the results, to which the name of utility belongs, are always of a secondary and external kind. A key is useful because it opens a door, or unlocks a cabinet; a horse, because it is used in farm labour, or in drawing a carriage; and a servant, because he performs certain offices that are for the comfort of the household. But we should never say that a key is useful, because it is a pleasure to discern the skill and beauty of the workmanship; or the horse, because it is a worthy study for the naturalist, and fills up the harmonious system of animal life; or a servant, because we have pleasure in his diligence, or admire his docility, uprightness, intelligence, and fidelity to his trust. Mr Mill however, assigns a chief place in his system to pleasures of this higher kind. He recognizes a difference of quality no less than quantity, and those which he places highest in the scale are of a

class to which the description of being "useful results" can hardly apply without extreme violence. "In estimating the consequences of actions," he says "there are always two sets of considerations involved; the consequences to the outward interests of the parties, and the consequences to the characters of the same persons, and their outward interests as dependent on their characters. In the estimation of the first there is not in general much difficulty. But it often happens that an essential part of the morality or immorality of an action or rule of action consists in its influence upon the agent's own mind." Now effects of this kind do not usually or naturally come under the title, which is the basis of the system. When we say that the gift of alms to some one in distress is useful, we refer to the outward want, the need of food, or clothing, or fire, which it meets and supplies, and not to the higher object, that it awakens feelings of gratitude, or helps to form a habit of kindness and benevolence. This inclusion of higher results, which belong to the moral features of right action, and not to its physical aspect, is a further desertion of the proper sense of the doctrine, which bases morals on usefulness alone.

Some reference, then, to good results aimed at, if not attained, desired and sought, if not actually realized, is essential to the idea of moral activity, and must enter, in one form or other, into every moral system, that seeks honestly to define and solve the great problems of ethical science. But a doctrine of pure utility, to deserve and justify the name, must define the goodness of actions neither by their conformity to a fixed standard of right, nor by the joy and dignity which springs from that harmony, when perceived, nor by agreement with the inward voice of conscience, nor the pleasure of self-

approval, nor by consequences strictly moral, which grow out of a prior perception of moral features in the agent, whereby he acts on the character of those around him for good or evil. It must define it by the outward benefits which follow the act, distinct alike from the joy of life, the pleasure of healthy action for its own sake, and from the higher moral results, wherein like produces like, vice breeds vice, and kindness and affection produce kindness and gratitude in return. But all these contrasts and limitations have either disappeared, or seem ready to disappear, in Mr Mill's modified form of the utilitarian theory. The social element of the Stoics, the philanthropy, though not the piety, of the New Testament, are so far ingrafted on the stock of the old Epicurean or the modern Benthamite morality, as to change the aspect and form of the whole system. The hard, rigid, cold and mechanical features of the doctrine of utility, when the term is employed in its strict and proper sense, are seen no longer. Instead of a scheme attractive by its logical simplicity, but repulsive as a skeleton without life or feeling, we have an imperfect junction of discordant elements. The modified Utilitarianism, which Mr Mill would substitute for the incomplete thinking of his master represents only the unfinished journey of a Lapland philosopher, born amidst Arctic frost and snow, and travelling southward unawares, towards warmer and more sunny regions, where fields are green, and skies are bright, and nature rejoices in light, warmth, and sunshine once more.

LECTURE X.

PLEASURE, HAPPINESS, AND WELL-BEING.

Utility, Pleasure, and Happiness, are treated by Mr Mill as equivalent terms, or the common basis of a Theory of Morals, based solely on the consequences of actions, and styled Utilitarian. The doctrine of Utility is said to be the Greatest Happiness principle, and Happiness is defined by the total of attainable pleasure, with freedom, as far as possible, from attendant pain. Yet these words, it cannot be doubted, are in some respects logical opposites, and awaken in our minds very distinct ideas. The charge, for instance, of being "practically voluptuous" would never be brought against pure utilitarianism: nor that of being "impracticably dry," or "hard, cold and mechanical," against the Epicurean view of life, in which Pleasure is the queen, and the virtues only the maidens which do her homage. Happiness, again, and still more the Greek *εὐδαιμόνια*, introduces a third class of associations; more various and comprehensive, more subjective and internal than those of Utility, more permanent than those of simple Pleasure, and which include some reference to man's dependence on external accidents, or on the secret arrangements of some divine power, higher than the human will.

The doctrine which bases morality upon pleasure, the creed of Epicurus and his followers, is defended by Mr Mill, side by side with an admission of its defectiveness in certain details, in these words:

"The comparison of the Epicurean life with that of beasts is felt as degrading, precisely because a beast's pleasures do not satisfy a human being's conception of happiness. Human beings have faculties more elevated than the animal appetites, and when once made conscious of them, do not regard any thing as happiness which does not include their gratification.....There is no known Epicurean theory of life which does not assign to the pleasures of the intellect, of the feelings and imagination, and of the moral sentiments, a much higher value as pleasures than to those of mere sensation. It must be owned, however, that utilitarian writers in general have placed the superiority of mental over bodily pleasures chiefly in the greater permanency, safety, uncostliness of the former, in their circumstantial advantages rather than in their intrinsic nature. And in all these points they have fully proved their case; but they might have taken the other, and as it may be called, the higher ground, with perfect consistency. It is quite compatible with the principle of utility, to recognize the fact that some *kinds* of pleasures are more desirable and valuable than others."

The doctrine of utility, as held by Bentham, consists mainly in the introduction of a new moral arithmetic, depending on a correct addition of pleasures. To such a process it is essential that the pleasures be conceived as being alike in kind, and differing in quantity and in continuance alone. When this view of them is abandoned, as Mr Mill has done, the arithmetic becomes impracticable, and the system founded upon it must come to an end.

Is the defence more successful with regard to Epicurus than Bentham? It consists in exposing what Mr Mill considers a careless misconception of the Epicurean philosophy. Now Cicero had certainly tenfold opportunity,

compared with Mr Mill, of knowing the system, which he heard expounded at Athens by the ablest living philosophers of that school, and of which his friend Atticus was an adherent. Yet he mentions (*De Finibus*, I. 7) the view expounded by Mr Mill, as a frequent and popular misconception of the Epicurean philosophy, and even as a misconception into which no one who had really learned and studied it could possibly fall. He writes on it as follows:

"Quid tibi, Torquate? quid huic Triario literae, quid historiae cognitioque rerum, quid poetarum evolutio, quid tanta tot versuum memoria voluptatis adfert? Nec mihi illud dixeris,—Haec enim ipsa mihi sunt voluptati, et erant ista Torquatis. Nunquam hoc ita defendit Epicurus; neque vero tu, Triari, aut quisquam eorum, qui aut saperet aliquid, aut ista didicisset. Et, quod quaeritur saepe, cur tam multi sint Epicurei; sunt aliae quoque causae, sed multitudinem hoc maxime allicit, quod ita putat dici ab illo, recta et honesta quae sint, ea facere per se laetitiam, id est, voluptatem. Homines optimi non intelligunt, totam rationem everti, si ita se res habeat; nam si concederetur, etiam si ad corpus nihil referatur, ista sua sponte et per se esse jucunda, per se esset virtus et cognitio rerum, quod minime ille vult, expetenda."

The Greek word, ἡδονή, and the Latin, voluptas, seem to correspond strictly to each other. They refer alike to the sensation of sweetness, or outward and animal enjoyment, though they are capable of extension, by analogy and resemblance, to pleasures of a higher kind. But it was the doctrine of Epicurus that these animal pleasures were the only original and fundamental objects of desire, that the direct pleasure, thus accessible, was increased by the memory of the past and expectation of the future; and that virtue, justice, friendship, were simply means by

which the wise and prudent might increase the amount of these sensible pleasures, or at least might obtain an equivalent, by freeing themselves from the pain of unsatisfied desires. Herein consists the force and emphasis of the picture, which Cleanthes, the Epicurean philosopher, was accustomed to give to his disciples. "He instructed his audience to imagine to themselves Pleasure, as portrayed in some picture, with beautiful robes, and royal ornaments, seated on a throne; and before her the Virtues, as little maidens, who should do nothing else, and claim no other office than waiting on Pleasure, and only whisper in her ear, if that could be shewn in painting, to do nothing rashly, which might offend the minds of men, and out of which any pain might arise. For we Virtues are born to do thee service, and we have no other office than this alone."

The word pleasure, in English, is less limited in meaning. It applies almost equally to mind or body, and gives prominence to subjective feeling, whatever its source or object may be. It includes what might be expressed in Greek by three distinct terms, ἡδονή, πάθος, and εὐδοκία, passive sensations as of sweetness or pleasant food, the pleasure in the forthgoing of active desire after any object, and complacent rest and satisfaction in good contemplated or attained. The pleasure, on which the system of Epicurus was founded, was of the first kind alone. The others are more cognate to the Stoic philosophy, although our language may include these also under the name of pleasure. In this sense every healthy form of activity and contemplation is accompanied with pleasure. The athlete may delight in the exercise of his bodily strength, the philosopher in the contemplation of truth, the virtuous man in kind actions and feelings of benevolence.

Happiness, again, with its Greek counterpart, *εὐδαιμονία*, brings before us a different set of associations. It means, by its derivation, what happens or falls out, only to be understood in a favourable sense. Thus it directs our thoughts instinctively to the outward circumstances of human life rather than to inward feelings alone. The conception it suggests is of some combination of good things, not wholly within our own power, nor purely dependent on our moral state and character, but involving what seem, to the popular and superficial view, the casualties of life. The Greek term has the same general sense, but includes more plainly a religious element. It views this happy lot as due to the favour of some Divine power concurring with human efforts, and without which those efforts would be of little avail; in the spirit of Shakspere's sentiment,

> There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough hew them as we will.

The term Well-being seems really better suited than any of these to express correctly the aspect of morals which deals with the true and right aim of all intelligent action. It avoids the external, secondary, and merely instrumental view of the action and the agent, which is implied in Utility, the transiency and capricious subjectivity of Pleasure, and the prominence given to the external sources of comfort or pain, independent of the human will, which the word Happiness naturally suggests. It agrees more nearly with the Stoic doctrine, that the true aim and wisdom of man is to live according to nature. It implies a natural standard of good, prior to our apprehensions of it, and independent of the disease or parallax of the percipient faculty, a healthy and good state of body and mind, on the real pursuit of which for ourselves, and the pro-

motion of its attainment by others, all right and healthy moral action depends. So far as the morality of consequences is true and sound, it may thus be embodied in the doctrine, that all right moral action includes the desire and aim to promote either our own or the general well-being.

The Greatest Happiness principle, when happiness is defined simply by a summation of momentary pleasures, diminished by momentary pains, involves a fourfold departure from the true standard and real basis of Moral Science.

And first, it involves a confusion of pleasures, different in kind, and even diametrically opposed. Bentham has given a list of fifteen kinds or varieties of pleasurable sensation, to which he attaches a high importance. But in this list he overlooks or sets aside the most important distinctions, on which a right classification of pleasure must depend. For these are of three kinds, diverse in dignity, animal or physical, intellectual, and moral. And of these three varieties each admits and requires a twofold division. There are the pleasures of knowledge or health, and those of illusion or disease. And hence there arise six main varieties, of which three alone have a positive value, but are of most unequal dignity; while three are negative in their real character. These call for the correction and restoration of the diseased faculty, or the instruction of the deceived spirit, and not for efforts to propagate the disease. It is no business of the true moralist to set up our own follies and vices, or those of others, for objects to be included in the aim of right moral action, because the foolish take pleasure in folly, and the vicious and impure may delight themselves greatly in their acts of profligacy and corruption.

The first fault, then, in the proposed basis, is the confusion of disparate and even opposite kinds of pleasure, so as by their imaginary sum to attain a first principle and correct guide of right action. The starting-point is thus moral confusion and blindness, and the issue to which it leads is likely to be a relaxed and impure code, in which holy aversion from evil is wholly absent and unknown. What can we expect from a theory, which ranks the pleasures of lust and malevolence, because they actually please selfish profligates, side by side with all the highest and holiest joys that can dignify and ennoble ransomed spirits, and prepare them for the society of heaven?

The second defect consists in the momentariness of the pleasures, which it is attempted to sum together, so as to form the basis of the scheme. These pleasures, as pleasures, do not and cannot co-exist. The pleasure of this hour expires, and ceases to exist, before the pleasure of the next can be born. By what right, then, can we collect them into one whole, and place this total for the foundation of a scheme of morals? In mathematics, the kind is altered by the process of integration. We rise one degree in the scale of thought each time that we pass through the infinite. The integral of a moving point is a line, of a moving line, a surface, of a moving surface, a solid. So also, if we are to sum up a series of pleasures, which never did, and never can coexist, each being hemmed in by the narrow bounds of its own ephemeral and momentary occurrence, we must pass from the conception of pleasures to that of a cause out of which they flow, a state of health, which gives birth to the pleasures of healthy life, a state of moral well-being, which gives birth to successive, momentary sensations of self-approval, peace of conscience, or quiet assurance of the Divine favour and blessing. The

summation, if it be of a finite sequence, is wholly inadequate. If it be infinite, there is a transition in kind. We deal no longer with a floating, perishable series of pleasant sensations, but with that health or goodness of body or mind, on which they depend, and out of which they flow.

A third defect, when the sum of pleasures is made the foundation of morals, consists in the feebleness and diversity of men's capacities for being pleased. The cry of contending moralists is like that of Archimedes,—Δὸς ποῦ στῶ. They want a first principle, free from the caprices of mere self-assertion, and this the utilitarian professes to find in his sum total of pleasures. But the words of Horace, "Varium et mutabile semper Femina," though they may be a libel on woman, apply certainly to Pleasure, the queen in the picture set by Cleanthes before the disciples of Epicurus for their worship and admiration. The keen pleasure and delight of to-day may pall on the weary appetite of to-morrow. A full soul loathes a honeycomb. The wise man returned from his trial of the choicest delicacies and luxuries of earth, to find, in the hour of reflection and remorse, that they were all "vanity and vexation of spirit." The fickleness and uncertainty of moral estimates is made a decisive objection to the subjective theories on morals. But Professor Grote observes with truth, that "feelings of kindness, of fairness, of generosity, of moral approval of some things, and condemnation of others, are in substance the same for all men, *at least to the same extent that happiness is the same for all men.*" We may perhaps go a little further. There has been, undoubtedly, a great diversity and partial contradiction in the moral maxims received and accepted, on various subjects, by the great body of mankind. But the diversity in their views of happiness, and in the things which really

please and gratify them, is greater still. For here all the diversities of moral judgment and feeling have their full influence, and are increased and redoubled by varieties of age, sex, rank, bodily temperament, early education, and later experience of human life. When all things which please any one at any time, the follies of childhood, vicious appetites, the sordid instincts of avarice, the frivolities of fashion, as well as all healthy and temperate enjoyments; and the delights of piety and benevolence, are heaped together, as they arise, and taken for the conjoint foundation and test of moral duty, can any one conceive that such a structure is built on solid rock, and not on a treacherous quicksand? The utilitarianism, which bases all moral duty on the agglomeration into one total of such heterogeneous and discordant materials, finds its only counterpart in Milton's magnificent allegory, and that bridge, of "wondrous art pontifical," which Sin and Death laboriously framed, out of materials not more diverse and unpromising, to form a bridge, "smooth, easy, inoffensive" from earth to hell.

> Hovering upon the waters, what they met
> Solid or slimy, as in raging sea
> Tost up and down, together crowded drove
> From each side shoaling....The aggregated soil
> Death with his mace petrific, cold and dry,
> As with a trident smote, the rest his look
> Bound with Gorgonian rigour not to move.

An attempted summation of all the pleasures of sensual vice and poetic fervour, of avarice and ambition, of benevolence and malice, of piety and blasphemy, which bad or good men have felt in time past, or will feel in time to come, into one vast conglomerate, to be a firm basis and foundation of the whole moral edifice,—a found-

ation exempt from the charge of caprice and uncertainty brought against rival systems, can find its only counterpart in the work of these old master-builders, Sin and Death.

The fourth and last defect of the system is perhaps the most serious and vital of the whole. The pleasures on which it is based include moral opposites, as well as materials otherwise most heterogeneous. They comprise the joys of virtue, piety, and zealous philanthropy, and the base and hideous pleasures of vice, the enjoyments of health and temperance, and the illusions and seductions of disease. No later process of prudential calculation can undo the fatal effects of this apotheosis, side by side with what is lawful, pure, and holy, of what is corrupt and impure. The Egyptian Pantheon, if it included monkeys, scorpions, and spiders, is not more repulsive, than a doctrine which makes the chief end of man to be the obtaining or producing a maximum total of pleasure; and then includes among them the basest and the vilest, merely because some one is pleased with them, as constituents of its grand legislative parliament of ethical science, which has to settle, by mere numerical preponderance of its votes, what is right or wrong to be done.

Once more, the pursuit of pleasure, as pleasure, is itself a diseased form of mental activity. For when we look at the matter closely, we find that pleasure depends on a relation between some faculty of body or mind, and some natural or acquired object of desire. It may be either a pleasure in motion or in rest, the felt approach to some real or fancied good, or else its real or fancied attainment. As coming events cast their shadows before, so does approaching good of any kind, and that shadow is the momentary pleasure of appetite or desire. And as calm, clear skies drop down dew, so momentary plea-

sures of satisfaction and complacence are the fleeting and successive products of good when actually attained. Good, in some form or other, is the goal or aim of the soul. Pleasures are the steps of the road that leads towards it. They are like milestones, that mark out the successive, momentary steps of the progress. And hence the direct pursuit of a maximum of pleasure, as the proper aim of life, and guide of moral duty, is just like travelling by cross roads, to meet and pass as many milestones as possible, instead of using the milestones to guide and encourage our progress to the city whither we would go, and where we seek our home.

The thankful enjoyment, then, of pleasures, which spontaneously attend the healthy exercise of our powers, either of body or mind, or the nobler pursuit of moral and spiritual excellence, is right and lawful. It fulfils a natural instinct, and obeys a command Divinely revealed. But the pursuit of pleasure, as a maximum to be secured by a study of the pleasant alone, and by a laborious calculation of expected future pleasures, is a distorted and diseased habit of mind. It cannot be the true basis of morals, but is rather a source and fountain of systematic immorality. Instead of aiming, as we ought, at the truest and highest good, we shall then bend our efforts to reproduce those pleasures which are only fleeting attendants on the instinctive craving for good of the lowest kind. In such a pursuit the toil is usually fruitless. The bubbles burst, when we try to seize them, and their rainbow colouring disappears.

The Eudaimonistic or Greatest Happiness principle, as distinguished from the enthronement of Utility or Pleasure as the cardinal object of morals, avoids this worst danger, and approaches one step nearer to the

truth. For happiness, in contrast with simple pleasure, or the outward uses of things, implies something, on the one side more lasting, and on the other more internal, vital, and self-contained. The ἡδονὴ of Epicurus, and the εὐδαιμονία of Aristotle indicate, in ethical theory, two different types of thought. But still the phrase, as the basis of all moral science, is imperfect. It retains, though in a less degree than Utility, an external and dependent character. The thoughts are fixed, in no small measure, on the favourable or adverse circumstances of men's outward life. Now true Virtue, especially in its higher and heroic forms, implies in the actual world struggle and conflict. Moral progress often demands a sacrifice of many outward elements of ease and comfort, on which, in the present mortal life, happiness is usually and naturally conceived to depend. And thus happiness, in the popular sense, does not answer fully to the true ideal of men's desires, because it retains, in its conception, too much of a transient, earthly, and mundane element. It seems to stop short below the highest and noblest aspirations of the conscience and heart, when they seek for "glory, honour, and immortality" by patient continuance in well-doing.

But now let us replace Happiness by the simpler and nobler term, Well-being, and a true conception of the right aim of all moral action dawns more clearly on our view. Good, abiding good, not momentary pleasure, that dies as soon as born, both for ourselves and for others, should be the object of supreme desire. This good is both external and internal, bodily, intellectual, and moral or spiritual. But it is all these in due order and gradation. The higher immensely outweighs the lower, and cannot properly be placed in the same balance. Yet,

in a comprehensive conception of the true aim of human action, not even the lowest forms of good can be lawfully neglected. In our present imperfect state, they form a natural ladder and ascending pathway, by which we rise to apprehend the higher. The Divine precept will here apply, by close analogy,—"Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost."

It is true that the lessons of faith and the experience of life will here bring before us a further and deeper truth. The lower elements of enjoyment need often to be renounced or resigned for a season, in order to secure the higher. Virtue grows and ripens most in the way of self-denial and self-sacrifice, and through the grave and gate of death is usually the path which leads to the joys of a higher life, abiding and immortal. But still man's capacities for enjoyment, even in outward things, are Divine gifts, which ought not, in their own due place and measure, to be despised.

> Οὗτοι ἀπόβλητ' ἐστὶ θεῶν ἐρικυδέα δῶρα,
> Ἃ αὐτοί κεν δῶσιν, ἑκὼν δ' οὐκ ἄν τις ἕλοιτο.

To learn what is truly good, and to attain it, to discern the nature of human well-being in all the elements of which it is composed, and then to seek after it earnestly and wisely, not for ourselves alone, but for all whom we have the means of helping towards its attainment, commends itself to the conscience and heart as the true definition of right moral action, when it is viewed on the side of its desire, aim, and tendency alone.

CONCLUSION.

Modern Utilitarianism, in the works of its main representatives, Paley, Bentham, and John Stuart Mill, has successively assumed three different, and really incompatible forms.

The first, in Paley, is the selfishly religious. Its merit, in contrast with the others, is that it seeks to include all the three elements, the personal, the social, and the religious, which must be combined in a just and comprehensive view of Moral Science. But the manner in which it combines them is artificial and unsound. In the fundamental definition of Virtue, its objects are exclusively social, its motive personal, and the religious element enters only as the external sanction of moral activity. The first defect is retracted in the course of the work, which recognises personal and religious, as well as social duties. The others remain, and are only mitigated, not removed, by the prominent place given to the doctrine of the Divine benevolence, and an endeavour to restrain the coarser forms of self-love by the great Christian hope of the life to come. Still the tendency of the system is to bring down all virtue to the level of a far-seeing selfishness, and to substitute for genuine piety and real benevolence acts of religious service or external kindness, impelled by selfish motives alone. It thus obscures

and falsifies the leading principles both of Moral Science and of Christian Faith. For Morality deals mainly, not with outward acts, but with the motives and desires of the heart. Its objects include, not our neighbour only, but our own true welfare and dignity, and far more, the great Author of our being, whom to know and love aright is the true glory and highest happiness of man. Also Christian Faith offers no promises to the purely selfish, however prudent their selfishness may be. It is really a Divine medicine for healing that sore disease of the human heart, which leads men to care only for themselves, even when doing acts of outward beneficence. And its grand aim is to write anew in the hearts of men the two great commandments, which deal with the inward feelings and emotions, not the actions alone, and enjoin the supreme love of God, and the love of all mankind.

The two other varieties of Modern Utilitarianism are non-religious. They do not attempt to combine all three elements, but the personal and the social alone. They simplify their task by leaving wholly out of sight the first and great commandment. They must, then, from a Christian point of view, be maimed, headless, and wholly imperfect, since they omit the practical source and fountain of all true and deep morality. But they fail even in their more limited aim of harmonizing the personal element with the social, and diverge widely from each other.

The scheme of Bentham may be said to be composed of two elements, personal selfishness, and jural or philosophical beneficence. Its first principle is that men are placed under the absolute dominion of pleasure and pain, so that pure self-love is the natural and necessary law of their being. On the other hand, it is the business of the

philosopher, legislator, or jurist, to enlarge his view, and devise laws which, by their external sanctions, shall persuade men to act in harmony with the general good out of regard to their own self-interest. The office of moral compulsion, assigned in Paley's theory to a Divine Lawgiver of perfect benevolence, is thus transferred to a moral aristocracy of jurists and philosophers, selfish by nature like all their fellows, but in whom this selfishness, by some happy accident, takes the form of delight in schemes of philanthropy, and in calculations on which the success of such schemes is to depend. In this way it is hoped to train a race of statesmen, who in their turn will train mankind in such modes and courses of action as experience proves best suited to promote their greatest happiness. But since the dominion of pain and pleasure is to be exclusive and entire, and intuitive laws of right and wrong are denounced as vague generalities and idle dreams, no key is supplied to explain this grand paradox, the birth of a school of legislative and jural philanthropy in the midst of a world, where the selfish pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain is the sole fundamental duty, and reigns and ought to reign supreme.

The third variety, that of Mr Mill, is non-religious like the last, but seeks to reconcile the personal and social elements in a different way. It is purely and simply philanthropic. The transition is effected by a logical ambiguity, which proves, when examined, to be a plain sophism. It is the dictate of instinct and experience that each one desires and seeks after his own happiness, and therefore the happiness of all is the instinctive and natural object of desire to all. But the true inference must be that, if instinct leads each to desire simply his own happiness, the general happiness is an object of

natural and instinctive desire to none. We can only effect the transition from the personal pleasure to the general good by a law of the reason or the conscience, nobler and more sacred than mere instinct, and which forms the very basis of all moral science. Accordingly the assumption of a world-wide philanthropy, as the basis and first principle of all morals, is the secret starting-point of Mr Mill's revised Utilitarianism. Only, since he claims to be an inductive, in contrast to an intuitive moralist, this assumption has to be silently made, and is as far as possible disguised. But while the system differs from that of Bentham by a more simple and thoroughgoing acceptance of benevolence, or a direct aim at the general happiness, as the primary truth in morals, and is thus intuitive, not inductive, in its foundation, in building the superstructure of the details of duty this relation is reversed. For Bentham relies, for rules of moral action, or the formation of a social code, on a process of arithmetic derived from the summation of pleasures, and thus resembling the pure and simple deductions of abstract science. But Mr Mill, renouncing the doctrine that pleasures and pains are homogeneous, strikes a fatal blow at this new invented moral arithmetic; and falls back on the experience of mankind, embodied in current maxims of morality, yet capable of being enlarged and corrected, in a tentative way, and through a merely inductive process, by the added experience of the present and future generations.

It is a common defect of all the three systems, that they nowhere propose to their disciples this fundamental inquiry:—If the moral contrast of actions depends on the results to which they lead, what is the source and nature of this very connection between later results and the

actions themselves? Does it rest on some chance, wholly unexplained and for ever inexplicable, which exists to-day, and might be reversed to-morrow? Does it depend on some blind fate, inexplicable but unchangeable? Is it derived from the arbitrary fiat of a Being supreme in power, but devoid of all moral qualities? Or finally, does it rest on a moral nature of rightness or wrongness, of good or evil, which exists in the heart and mind of the moral agent, and on which, by a sequence as firm and sure as the moral perfections of the Creator, the nature of the results must depend? Utilitarianism, whenever it is advanced as a complete theory, which excludes all other definitions, and reigns alone, must involve a negative Theology in one or other of three alternative forms, the worship of blind Chance, of blind Fate, or of a personal Divinity, omnipotent and supreme, but lawless and arbitrary, and devoid of all moral perfections. But when once we acknowledge a true and living God, the Holy Governor of a moral universe, the true limits of the doctrine are restored. Its proper sphere is not in the first principles or main outlines of moral duty, but in the secondary applications. For here we mount up slowly, by the help of past experience, to discern the best means for the attainment of right and noble ends, until we rise above the complications of our earthly life, and see light in the light of heaven.

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